

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Leicester Grammar School Trust

November 2019



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School's Details

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Leicester Grammar School is a co-educational day school founded in 1981, with a junior school established in 1992. In 2008 the school relocated to purpose-built premises in Great Glen, on the south-eastern fringes of the city. Governance of the school is through the Leicester Grammar School Trust, whose board of trustees has responsibility for all sections of the school. The school has a Christian foundation but is a diverse community which welcomes pupils of all faiths.
- 1.2 The Headmaster of Leicester Grammar School and Principal of the Leicester Grammar School Trust has been in post since April 2019.

What the school seeks to do

1.3 In pursuit of all-round excellence, the school aims to develop the academic potential of every pupil. It seeks to enrich each pupil's experience through music, sport and other interests. It wishes to allow the moral and spiritual well-being of pupils to grow and to nurture the individual in a co-educational school with a Christian ethos.

About the pupils

1.4 The vast majority of pupils come from the city of Leicester and southern Leicestershire. A significant proportion of pupils come from professional backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the junior school, senior school and sixth form is above average. The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 177. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 57 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), 9 of whom receive additional support. In the junior school the curriculum is designed to extend and enable all pupils to reach their potential through inherent differentiation and challenge activities. In the senior school the more able are encouraged via an individualised curriculum which will stretch and challenge. Musical talent is nurtured through ensembles while there are opportunities for pupils to act in the school productions. Particular talent for sport is fostered via participation in national competitions.

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, 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 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 junior school, the school measures attainment using nationally standardised tests. In the years 2016 to 2018, the results were above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2016 to 2018, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2016 to 2018 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

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

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'.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils are extremely proud to be members of the community and their attitudes towards learning reflect this.
 - Pupils are highly articulate, personable and confident.
 - Pupils' achievement, academic and otherwise, is excellent.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils display excellent behaviour.
 - Pupils demonstrate excellent respect for one another within a richly diverse community.
 - Pupils show excellent self-confidence and self-awareness.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent judgements, the school might wish to consider:
 - Giving pupils a stronger voice in the life of the school.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Overall, in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the junior and the senior schools, pupils' achievement is excellent. Results at all levels have been above the national average for maintained schools in the years 2016 to 2018 and, although comparative data is not yet available, they were also positive in 2019. Pupils throughout the school display excellent attitudes to learning and there are no significant differences for any groups of pupils. The very large majority of children in EYFS, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL), make excellent progress and meet or exceed their learning and development goals. For the very small minority of junior pupils who do not achieve their expected attainment levels, progress is inhibited by more complex EAL challenges and other developmental factors. Knowledgeable EYFS leadership and staff ensure that accurate data is inputted to EYFS assessments and analysed correctly to provide a true picture of children's progress, attainment and achievement. Throughout the school, pupils' predominantly excellent outcomes are the result of the very effective curriculum, teaching and assessment, encouraged by senior leadership and the trustees. All pupils demonstrate a determined commitment to measurable success which they see as fundamental to their proud identity as members of this community. In line with the aims of the school, pupils are very competent when working collaboratively; they equally produce high quality individual work.
- Pupils are acutely aware of how their knowledge, skills and understanding in different subject areas 3.6 overlap and interlink, and they apply them readily and effectively. In the EYFS, work is matched to children's ability and appropriate support and challenge is provided by the teachers. EYFS staff take every opportunity to influence individual children's development and are continually alert to enabling them to take the next steps in their learning. In Reception, children competently applied their mathematical and technological skills to solve a problem posed in the story of a squirrel whose wheelbarrow broke, necessitating the construction of a replacement vehicle to transport his ten acorns. EYFS teachers' excellent lesson planning focuses on providing children with fun activities which stimulate, challenge and engage them, capitalising on their natural curiosity and interests. In Years 1 and 2, pupils felt that their development of gymnastics skills was excellent. Additionally, in these years, pupils' handwriting is excellent and pupils of all abilities can produce well-formed cursive script. In the senior school, pupils make excellent progress in knowledge, skills and understanding because of the passionate commitment and enthusiasm staff have for their subjects. Senior pupils have excellent thinking skills. They have a genuine curiosity about what they are learning and readily ask questions to deepen their understanding and discuss ideas perceptively with one another. All pupils, including those with SEND, are able to engage in high quality dialogue with their teachers. In GCSE mathematics, pupils demonstrated high level competency in their manipulation of algebraic fractions and use of complex formulae. In A-level economics, prompted by skilful teacher questioning, pupils deduced how a graph would change in related situations. The school encourages very high expectations and stimulates pupils throughout the school to explore their learning by pursuing their own lines of enquiry.

Educational Quality Inspection

- 3.7 Senior pupils have achieved success in regional and national competitions, including becoming Midland champions in the Institute of Ideas debating competition in 2017. The senior UK maths challenge team recently won their regional round and the school came first in the regional Historical Association Great Debate competition. Additionally, the school's Green-Power team recently won awards including Best Newcomer and the IET Engineering Award at Aintree. There is a very high level of pupil participation in a wide range of musical activities and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme currently has seventy-nine pupils working towards bronze and twenty-four pupils aiming for gold awards. In 2018, the senior school was represented by one hundred and eighty-eight teams and involved in eight hundred and twenty-six fixtures, across fourteen sports, with recent successes being celebrated in netball, girls' hockey, table tennis and rugby. Pupils' significantly high level of success is a result of the school's wide ranging programme of enrichment activities, academic and otherwise.
- 3.8 From the EYFS to the sixth form pupils are highly articulate. The culture of the whole school encourages pupils to express themselves constructively in discussion and debate. Pupils' listening skills are also particularly good; they confidently contribute to discussion in class and amongst themselves and value each other's views and opinions in and outside the classroom. EYFS children's progress in communication is excellent; they use language appropriately to describe their learning and to record their work in age appropriate ways with relevant support and challenge provided by the staff. Pupils at all stages are confident and enjoy performing in front of audiences. Year 3 pupils showed excellent communication skills in a junior assembly, and the rest of the junior school listened and supported them extremely well. Many senior pupils are involved in drama, from large scale productions, through the biennial house drama competition, to weekly assemblies. An example was seen in a Year 7 and 8 anti-bullying play, in which an alien was subjected to unkindness. Pupils are stretched by enthusiastic and articulate teaching. In a Year 3 English lesson on how to use techniques to make writing more exciting, children adeptly used the different elements and showed excellent writing skills. Year 6 pupils' ability to communicate was demonstrated in a French lesson by their excellent use of complex French vocabulary. In a GCSE English lesson, pupils were asked to identify sensory detail and semantic fields in a newspaper article, which they did so with a high degree of competency. Sixth form pupils enjoy practising their speaking and listening skills in the debating society, such as discussing whether voting should be compulsory. Sixth formers cite that they benefit hugely from mock interviews with parents representing different professions, and from visiting speakers who give regular lectures. Many pupils develop their communication skills through involvement in a variety of school publications, including the school's newsletters and magazines.
- 3.9 Pupils have excellent numeracy skills. The development of their competency in this area is particularly strong in the junior school. For example, pupils are eager to engage in tasks that require higher order thinking and challenge. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate excellent mathematical understanding, which is nurtured through the individual support that staff provide for their needs. Pupils' ability to apply their numeracy to other subjects such as design technology is excellent. This is because opportunities to learn about numbers and to use them are plentiful across every aspect of the learning environment. GCSE pupils expertly use curve sketches to support work on quadratic functions and show a fluent grasp of trigonometrical calculations whilst constructing a sine curve; they can confidently rearrange formulae in order to apply Kirchhoff's Laws to circuits. Senior pupils' ability to draw and interpret graphs is excellent. Sixth formers capably construct and explain monopoly and trade union diagrams. Pupils comment that, 'Numbers are everywhere'.

- 3.10 Since the previous inspection the school has developed the application of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' skills. Children in EYFS develop high level competency in ICT in relation to their age. This is because staff are proficient ICT exponents and facilitate child-initiated learning at appropriate moments, successfully addressing a recommendation from the previous inspection. Older pupils are highly confident in using standard applications such as word-processing and spreadsheets and are able to grasp more specialist applications, such as graph-drawing packages and website design quickly when needed. The school has a wide range of ICT resources and senior pupils use their skills to excellent effect. For example, they produce high-quality presentations and posters, and use their knowledge as a means to analyse data in science, to research topics independently and to consolidate and revise material efficiently. Skill levels are monitored effectively via an ICT baseline testing exercise in Years 8 and 9 and any gaps are then addressed in the most appropriate curriculum area. Sixth formers confirm that ICT is used commonly in every subject area. They also highlight the positive environmental impact of being able to access digital copies of weighty mark schemes.
- 3.11 Pupils show excellent development of their study skills and curiosity; they confidently and independently apply their new knowledge to previous learning and in a wide variety of different experiences. Children in EYFS display very positive attitudes to learning and are irrepressible participants in the activities available to them, both indoors and outside, where increased use of the substantial grounds has extended the outdoor learning environment since the previous inspection. They learn to work very well individually and collaboratively from an early age. In Year 6 excellent independent thought was shown when a class discussion about gender and sporting ability moved on to a discussion about genetics. Pupils in the senior school are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, with many opportunities for independent project work. Sixth formers particularly value opportunities to conduct their own research for their Extended Project Qualifications. Rigorous teaching with high expectations, annotated mark schemes and class discussions all contribute to very high attainment.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 At all stages of transition, pupils feel well prepared for the next stage of their education because of strong and supportive guidance from staff. The vast majority of sixth form pupils are successful in gaining places at universities or in apprenticeships. The senior school has a clear commitment to providing Career Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to all its students from Year 7 onwards.
- 3.14 Pupils are extremely self-confident and self-aware and show high levels of self-reflection. In the EYFS, children demonstrate an assured readiness to improve their own learning. This is because adults let children know they can always be trusted and take a serious interest in their questions. Pupils develop high levels of self-confidence and esteem because lessons and activities such as tutor time facilitate discussion and pupils know their contributions are valued by staff. The school's leadership, including at trustee level, demonstrates a strong drive to get pupils to be the best they can be, in line with the school's aims. In class, pupils demonstrate high level resilience in their learning and are comfortable in taking risks in their work. They understand that they can make mistakes and that in turn, this enables them to make progress. This was seen in a number of lessons in both junior and senior schools, which demonstrates that independence and self-discipline are reflected in learners from the EYFS onwards.
- 3.15 Pupils in a junior school assembly about what makes people unique within a community, showed clear understanding that the decisions they make determine success at school and beyond. EYFS children were observed to be continually making carefully considered decisions and they are engaged in the range of activities provided for them. For example, they make their own choices of resources and decided who they worked with. Junior pupils during discussion explain that independence and decision making is important in order to have an interesting and satisfying day at school. Senior pupils show an increasing determination and ability to be independent in their learning and are supported by staff to make well-informed decisions in and out of the classroom. Sixth formers volunteer for school duties, such as ensuring rubbish is cleaned up at break times, because they recognise it is important to think about the impact on others. Pupils, during discussion, cite that they develop strong qualities of self-responsibility because this is promoted through the school's ethos and by the senior leadership and management. Additionally, they state that the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum provides them with an in-depth understanding of how to promote their personal success and well-being.
- 3.16 The pupils' spiritual understanding is excellent. Pupils show a very strong appreciation of other cultures and have a well-developed awareness of aesthetic and non-material aspects of life. Following a Year 1 and 2 assembly, pupils showed an excellent understanding of the abstract concept of courage and how they could relate it to themselves. Pupils in the senior school appreciate spiritual aspects of life through the judicious use of religious and philosophical teachings and learn to cherish and celebrate the values of community through assemblies at all stages. Pupils value the role music and art plays in the daily life of the school which seeks to promote their aesthetic and cultural awareness. This was demonstrated when a group of Year 6 pupils stopped spontaneously in the school foyer to listen to a brass group performing and were very eager to declare how lovely the music was. Senior pupils develop their strong appreciation of non-material aspects though activities such as the philosophy society, pupil-led lunchtime clubs, regular debates and extensive charity work. This is balanced with their passionate commitment to the environment and a sincere care for the well-being of their neighbour.

- 3.17 The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is exemplary at all times and they have a clear understanding of the importance of this. Staff expectations are high. Children in the EYFS display kindness and consideration for one another and respect towards adults. In the midst of much fun, they successfully learn that it is important to take some things seriously, such as telling the truth and knowing right from wrong. Pupils have great respect for systems of rules and law and are prepared to challenge misbehaviour and unkindness. There is a purposeful atmosphere in the school and pupils are taught to understand the consequences of their actions and the impact they have on others. During discussion, pupils cite that this promotes a positive vision of moral understanding and encourages them to be the best version of themselves. The school rightly prides itself on its caring and supportive atmosphere and the prevailing compassionate ethos.
- 3.18 The social awareness of pupils is excellent. Children in EYFS were observed socialising very effectively at all times, working well with others and solving problems together. This is the result of staff planning and setting up activities which enable children to become involved and succeed. In Year 1 and 2, pupils' high-level ability to work collaboratively was evidenced in problem solving and reasoning in mathematics and through the use of 'talk partners'. Pupils in both the junior and senior schools are involved in committees such as the school council, putting forward thoughtful suggestions about ways in which they feel the school can be even better. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the opportunity from Year 9 to participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme which they agree develops collaborative working and problem-solving skills. In addition, sixth formers are trained as peer-supporters and the strong house system encourages teamwork and the achievement of common goals through inter-house events. Pupils further develop their social awareness through their work in the charity committee, organising fundraising events for local, national and international charities. These include a community link with a school in Africa, and support for an orphanage in Malaysia, both of which have been visited by pupils in recent years.
- 3.19 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils agreed that the school actively promotes respect and tolerance of other people. The school is a multi-cultural community but has a strong Christian ethos and this is accepted by all. Parents commented that the school provides a positive environment and that recent changes to leadership and management have benefited the school enormously. Pupils' views and opinions are listened and responded to, although the school council has only recently been reconvened. Pupils care for each other, respecting and valuing diversity. During discussion, pupils commented that the school supports their cultural beliefs and endeavours to ensure that everyone can fully participate in all aspects of the curriculum and activities beyond the classroom. For example, on a Year 6 camping trip, pupils say that special arrangements were made so that pupils could observe their respective religious customs, such as daily prayer.
- 3.20 In comments made in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and in interview, a small minority of pupils voiced views that the school did not always encourage them to follow a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence concludes that, whilst the vast majority of pupils are confident that they know how to stay safe and feel extremely well supported, arrangements to support their personal well-being are in high demand, sometimes limiting easy accessibility. This is duly acknowledged by leadership and management, including the trustees, who demonstrate a strong commitment towards promoting pupil well-being.

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 vice-chair of trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings 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

Mr Richard Gibbs	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Farren	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr Thomas Hales	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Helen Andrews	Team inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Mr James Fowler	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Catherine Hill	Team inspector (Senior teacher, HMC school)
Mr Christian Kendall-Daw	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Ian Silk	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Wakefield	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)