



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Old Vicarage School

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Old Vicarage School		
DfE number	831/6002		
Address	Old Vicarage School 11 Church Lane Darley Abbey Derby DE22 1EW		
Telephone number	01332 557130		
Email address	office@oldvicarageschool.co.uk		
Head	Mrs Kerry Wise		
Proprietors	Mr Matthew Adshead and Mrs Jenny Adshead		
Age range	3 to 11		
Number of pupils on roll	118		
	Nursery	12	
	Pre-Prep	51	Prep 55
Inspection dates	7 to 10 November 2022		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Old Vicarage School is an independent co-educational day school. It was founded in 1933 and bought by its present proprietors in 2007. An advisory panel of educational and other professionals provide independent advice to the school.
- 1.2 The school consists of three sections: the nursery, for children aged three to four years; the pre-prep, for pupils aged four to seven years; and the prep, for pupils aged seven to eleven years.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, a new head has been appointed and improvements to the school's facilities have included the construction of a woodland learning environment and an artificial grass surface.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to nurture character and kindness and to help its pupils to become their best selves through the provision of a caring, supportive, and enriching learning environment. The school is mindful that childhood is a precious time in a person's life and seeks to encourage each pupil to develop into a positive citizen, showing a sense of responsibility towards the local and wider community.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional or business backgrounds, living within a 15-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is broadly average in relation to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified six pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all 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 two pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The curriculum is modified for the more able pupils identified by the school.

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. 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 well-being of the pupils.

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

Key findings

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

- Pupils, including those with EAL and SEND, make excellent progress.
- Pupils are highly articulate and have strong communication skills.
- Pupils are extremely confident at handling numbers and calculation; they relish challenge and regularly collaborate whilst solving problems.
- Pupils of all ages exhibit highly positive attitudes to learning.

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

- Pupils mix with ease across all age groups and show care and consideration for each other.
- Pupils have high self-esteem, show mature levels of self-discipline and are extremely confident, yet possess not a hint of arrogance.
- Pupils actively support each other in a collaborative atmosphere, respecting and recognising individual difference.
- Pupils demonstrate an acute understanding of right and wrong and a mature appreciation of the importance of kindness.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Further develop the pupils' independence in their own learning, through providing more self-directed and open-ended tasks.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils demonstrate high levels of academic achievement as a result of teaching that provides suitable levels of challenge, nurturing pastoral care, and thoughtfully planned resources. By the time pupils leave Year 6 they attain excellent results in externally standardised tests and curriculum assessments. Comprehensive tracking and monitoring procedures enable leaders and teachers to identify relative areas of weakness in the curriculum, in the performance of cohorts and for individual pupils. The interventions provided in response to this, support or challenge pupils according to their needs. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and those who are most able, make excellent progress,

in relation to their starting points, which are varied on entry. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a very large majority of parents felt that teaching, including online provision, enables their children to make progress and all pupils who responded agreed that teachers know how to help them learn.

- 3.6 Pupils speak confidently, conveying their ideas with great clarity. They have highly developed vocabularies for their age, as a result of a language-rich learning environment where they are encouraged to use subject specific key words, cross-curricular links and synonyms as the norm. For example, a younger class discussing feelings for Pirate Tom, articulated well-constructed sentences, utilising clear steps, connectives, first person and advanced adjectives. This progresses to high-quality sophisticated writing as seen in work produced by the oldest pupils, of all abilities, when penning an account from an alternative perspective from a passage in *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo. Core values of respect and kindness permeate the school, which generates an atmosphere which helps pupils develop excellent listening skills and confidence in speaking out. This includes answering questions in class, making presentations to their peers, and activities such as public speaking. This was witnessed on numerous occasions during the inspection, such as when pupils acted out parts, with great dramatic effect from the poem *The Visitor*, by Ian Serraillier in preparation for their verse speaking competition, which all pupils take part in.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages show high levels of numerical competence, successfully utilising their excellent calculation skills both in mathematics and across the curriculum. Children in the EYFS make rapid progress in open number work, learning how to write their numbers through singing; for instance, the number three; 'round the tree, round the tree; now I've made the number three'. Pupils have a sound understanding of place value using number facts and demonstrate strong collaborative skills to aid problem solving. This was evidenced by a Year 3 pupil suggesting to their partner the use of an inverse operation to help check if an answer was correct. Older pupils explained how they enjoy the challenge of solving problems, with the most able pupils demonstrating highly advanced skills to solve algebraic equations. Scrutiny of work demonstrates pupils' confident application of numeracy skills and knowledge in other subjects, for instance data handling work in science and use of coordinates in geography. Pupils in a Year 4 religious education lesson applied their mathematical knowledge of number to calculate the distance completed by Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem and how long this would have taken. The youngest pupils used knowledge of shape and space to effortlessly get into a circle during a games lesson.
- 3.8 Pupils develop high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding as they progress through the school. This is a result of high expectations and a thorough knowledge of each pupil, delivered by capable and committed staff. Pupils of all ages apply their learning and understanding highly effectively. This was seen by Year 1 pupils in science who demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of a food pyramid, declaring that strawberries should go in the middle because they contain vitamins and minerals. Pupils in Year 4 used technical terms, such as rhythm, to discuss the music *Lark Rising* by Vaughn Williams, developing their ideas further and showing a clear understanding of the use of figurative language in describing the bird and their feelings. Children in the EYFS accurately recited the months of the year and days of the week and applied this understanding to what day was yesterday and what day it would be tomorrow. They are highly successful for their age in the acquisition of linguistic skills. Pupils in Year 5 accurately and confidently named different parts of the body in French. Pupils across the age range have excellent performance skills in singing and drama.
- 3.9 Children begin to acquire good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in the EYFS, where the use of electronic tablets is integrated into the curriculum from the earliest ages. They become adept in the use of a range of programmes to present and interpret information and to write in code as they move through the school. Older pupils manipulate data effectively and present their research in different forms to an audience. This was evidenced by the oldest pupils using their ICT skills to produce posters, displayed round the school and presentations delivered to parents regarding online safety. 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, pupils' use of ICT greatly enhanced their learning, with technology being used to good effect for research, presentations and for work tasks. For example, research in a geography lesson on facts about different countries highlighted pupils' ability to gather information using recently acquired tablets.

- 3.10 Pupils' study skills develop well as they progress through the school, with highly developed collaborative skills enhancing their progress. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their children with the team-working, collaborative, and research skill they need in later life. Year 5 pupils studying *Private Peaceful* by Michael Morpurgo, successfully synthesised the pertinent points to write an informal letter to Tomo. Pupils in Year 2 confidently hypothesised that their heartbeat would beat faster once they started exercising during a games lesson. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, draw knowledge effectively from sources to which they have been directed and are extremely attentive in lessons, although in some cases they show more limited initiative beyond that of directed teaching. Where more open-ended tasks are presented to pupils, they develop their thinking and learning to a higher level. Year 2 pupils, for example, displayed considerable skills of synthesis when extrapolating key features of an information text.
- 3.11 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, such as house awards. Pupils gain places at their chosen senior schools, with some attaining academic and sports or creative arts scholarships. They have achieved plaudits in a number of local, regional and national competitions in diverse pursuits such as music, mathematics, the arts, and sport. Pupils' creative talents and expertise were evidenced through high quality displays, including a wonderful wildflower painting representing the year groups from the tiny seedlings in nursery, to the Year 6 children floating away to secondary school. Clear tracking of achievements, combined with opportunities ensures that the school's leadership team and proprietors have been successful in their aim of providing an enriching environment, in which every pupil has the opportunity to shine.
- 3.12 Pupils are enthusiastic and determined learners, willingly prepared to take risks, enjoy the opportunities of different styles of teaching and to rise to challenging opportunities when these are offered. They are highly productive when working individually, with a learning partner or in a group. Pupils demonstrate a resolute sense of purpose, moving calmly to their lessons. They settle quickly and display an eagerness to learn and be involved in discussion and questioning. Pupils respond willingly to guidance in lessons and are further empowered to make progress and self-reflect on their work through a highly effective next step marking policy. This is supported by a very large majority of pupil questionnaire responses and interviews, who felt that marking helps them to improve. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning are acknowledged and encouraged through the rewarding of positive behaviour through verbal praise, coins, badges and sought-after mentions in assemblies. The school's implicit culture and sense of family that is strongly promoted by the leadership team and proprietors, underpins the pupils' desire to do their best.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils across all ages have the confidence to share ideas and exhibit high levels of self-esteem in a humble and respectful manner. This was evident in a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lesson where through words and actions, all pupils confidently explained why they were different, with peers instinctively encouraging and supporting all. Proud of their school, pupils are at ease with staff, other adults and with one another. They develop strongly as individuals, enabled by an open culture and the high level of pastoral care they receive; pupils are reassured by the opportunity presented by the schools worry procedure for them to express concerns in person or in writing. Pupils' self-confidence and resilience is developed by many features of school life, such as rewards for good work and good behaviour, and the opportunity to perform on the public stage. They

are able to reflect on the person they have become, and they know how to improve, always driven by the school motto: *Character and kindness*. All parents in the questionnaire stated that the school helps their child to be confident and independent.

- 3.15 Pupils show extremely high moral development and distinguish clearly between right and wrong behaviours. Throughout the whole school, pupils behave with courtesy and consideration for others; EYFS children were seen negotiating effectively to avoid argument as they traded tools peacefully. Pupils were observed holding doors open for each other without being asked, offering others daily greetings, and showing genuine interest in each other's feelings. Relationships are extremely positive, and a culture of respect and kindness pervades all aspects of school life. Pupils told inspectors that they have very little experience of bullying at school as there is no tolerance for unkind behaviour and immediate interventions are put in place to address any unfavourable actions or resolve friendship issues should they occur. A family ethos where all pupils display and discuss their inherent values of knowing what is expected and how to be kind and respectful is a strong feature of the school community.
- 3.16 The pupils' social awareness is excellent. Their co-operative and supportive responses towards peers and younger children, encouraged through a well-developed buddying system are instinctive, which helps to create a harmonious and engaging community. Pupils see their school as a place where everyone is respected and treated as unique individuals, with excellent pupil to staff ratios contributing enormously to their outstanding social development. Pupils were seen collaborating effectively, engaging in discussion, and enjoying successfully completed shared tasks, such as EYFS children gathering ingredients for a 'Gruffalo pie'. Pupils build strong relationships and feel respected by teachers and support staff, who clearly want them to do well in all aspects of school life. These factors help pupils to develop into highly considerate and empathetic young people who demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty to their school and who work together effectively to fulfil common goals.
- 3.17 Pupils show an extremely good understanding that decisions they make can be instrumental in determining their own future success and well-being. They make sensible choices of activities, following their interests to broaden their learning. Choice is a common feature of school life, such as pupils using the 'three-knock rule' to enable them to leave class to go and talk to the head about a concern, or older pupils in an art lesson independently deciding which character to draw. Pupils manage their time effectively; the youngest children quickly self-select activities as they arrive at school and Year 3 displayed a mature approach to what to do when the internet went down. Pupils understand that the decisions they make have an impact on that of others, and they are diligent in seeking ways in which to minimise upsetting others when doing so, taking heed of the school's advice to treat others as you wish to be treated yourself.
- 3.18 Pupils have a notably strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Starting in the EYFS, pupils enjoy outdoor learning activities, in which they acquire strong observational skills and a real appreciation for all aspects of life. This is due to the commitment of leadership to taking full advantage of the school's woodland area to inspire, challenge and motivate children to learn. The pupils' sheer delight in one such session when they heard the crunch of the leaves or splash of the water was palpable, as was the awe and wonder experienced by finding a pinecone or taking care not to disturb a 'precious beetle'. Older Pupils show a mature appreciation of how being with family or absorbed in drawing or painting makes them feel relaxed, happy, and lost in the moment and their capacity to think beyond day-to-day issues was evident when they informed inspectors that nature is beauty in action and that inner beauty such as kindness is needed to find happiness in life. The high quality of pupils' spiritual understanding and development is evident in their ability to empathise with others.
- 3.19 Pupils make a significant contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. In discussion, pupils said that they appreciate the buddy system, and the opportunity to represent their school in events within the school, locally and nationally. Pupils embrace responsibility from an early age with enthusiasm and a high level of understanding. They are pleased to have the opportunity to be involved in the democratic process of elections for some positions, such as the school council. The school

council offer suggestions for charitable projects and fund raising, with pupils developing a sense of belonging, as they are committed to and successful in raising money for a variety of charitable causes. Pupils are involved regularly in projects that benefit others and speak of the pride they feel in their school, and the way it encourages them always to give of their best, without comparing themselves directly to others. Supporting a school in Tanzania, writing a letter to the local MP regarding results of their road survey, support for the local food bank and support for a diabetes day all exemplify the school's wish to promote an awareness of the needs of others when pupils are still young.

- 3.20 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 which permeates the school. Pupils have a thoughtful awareness of British society, particularly the role of tolerance. Pupils confirmed in discussion that they aim to be the best version of themselves. They recognise that others may have different views from themselves, but say that everyone is equally valued, irrespective of ability, opinion or belief. During pupil interviews, it was shared that, 'People are forgiving here', and all pupils and parents who answered the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages them to respect and tolerate other people. Pupils value the opportunity to learn about other religions and cultures, and cultural understanding is developed through the curriculum with a range of topic days such as European day of languages.
- 3.21 Pupils know how to stay safe, in both the real and virtual world. They appreciate the regular focus on online safety in ICT lessons and speak confidently of the need to maintain anonymity in certain scenarios, protect passwords, and to adopt a mature approach to strangers. They understand the importance of being physically healthy and value the opportunities they have in school and beyond to participate in team and individual sports and activities. They also understand how to be mentally healthy in an environment where this aspect of their lives is taken seriously. Pupils are made aware that this is an aspect of their lives which they need to nurture, ably supported by Oscar the much-loved school dog. Pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy diet is reinforced by nutritious lunches and was seen by older pupils eloquently talking about balanced meals. In discussion, all pupils felt the food was excellent, with ample choice and sufficient portions, and in response to the questionnaire almost all parents felt that the school encourages their children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

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 the proprietors, 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
Mrs Sarah Gillam	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Olivera Raraty	Compliance team inspector (Head, GSA school)