



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Windrush Valley School

July 2022

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School's Details

School	Windrush Valley School			
DfE number	931/6105			
Address	Windrush Valley School The Green Ascott-under-Wychwood Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 6AN			
Telephone number	01993 831793			
Email address	info@windrushvalleyschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Douglas			
Proprietor	Ingenio Education Ltd			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	100			
	EYFS	29	Junior	71
Inspection dates	5 to 8 July 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Founded in 1951 in Burford, Windrush Valley is an independent coeducational day school situated in the village of Ascott-Under-Wychwood, near Chipping Norton in West Oxfordshire. Since the previous inspection, ownership of the school moved to Ingenio Education and the school is governed by the proprietor and a small advisory board. The current head was appointed in September 2018.
- 1.2 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to develop pupils who are innovative, creative and adaptable with strong communication and problem-solving skills. It encourages and challenges children to achieve and sustain high standards of individual academic success, personal development, and independence of thought and spirit within a climate of personal responsibility and regard for others.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils live within a 10-mile radius of the school and are from professional families. Standardised assessment data indicate that the ability of the pupils is average when compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 12 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities of whom three receive additional specialist help. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. Where pupils are identified as being more able, the curriculum is modified for them.

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 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 good.

- Pupils demonstrate good levels of academic and extra-curricular achievement, although some may not achieve at the highest levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across different areas of learning are well-developed and sometimes excellent.
- Pupils are excellent communicators.
- Pupils demonstrate a good level of focus, self-discipline and effective study skills in lessons.
- Pupils' study skills and independent learning skills are not fully developed.

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

- Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are excellent.
- Behaviour within the school is excellent and pupils show a clear understanding of the impact of less positive behaviour on others.
- Pupils show an excellent level of social collaboration and respect for each other.
- Pupils' contributions to others, the school and wider community are excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of sensitivity to and tolerance of others' differences.

Recommendations

3.3 The school should make the following improvements:

- Enable all pupils to achieve the highest levels of which they are capable through increased use of assessment data to identify their strengths and areas for development.
- Enable all pupils to develop their higher-order thinking skills and to take leadership in their learning through the provision of challenging tasks and open-ended activities.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils demonstrate good levels of academic achievement as a result of thoughtful and supportive teaching and a nurturing pastoral care system. The undoubted commitment of senior leaders to develop the curriculum, planning and assessment, and the well-planned curriculum provided by

teachers, ensures all pupils, including those with SEND, attain good results in internal tests and public examinations. Tracking, monitoring and intervention systems support pupils' good levels of progress and good academic outcomes. Effective analysis of assessment data is less well-developed and opportunities to stretch and challenge individuals to ensure their potential is achieved are lacking. This results in some children not fully achieving their potential. Those with SEND achieve similar levels of progress in line with their peers, benefitting from the knowledgeable and sensitive support provided by the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching, including any online provision, enables their child to make progress, and all pupils feel their teachers know their subjects well.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding throughout their learning develop well and, in some cases, are excellent. Appropriate planning by subject teachers, overseen by senior leaders, ensures pupils develop a suitable range of skills, which they apply effectively across the curriculum. Pupils acquire new knowledge and are skilled in their application of techniques and methods. Children in the EYFS identified odd and even numbers by their sense of touch whilst handling pieces wrapped in tin foil, and Year 6 pupils demonstrated good understanding of French vocabulary. Pupils draw upon previous learning with accuracy, as seen when Year 5 pupils referenced their detailed knowledge of World War II evacuees in a poetry lesson based on train journeys, and when Year 3 pupils demonstrated outstanding confidence when speaking in French. Their confident use of vocabulary and their ability to speak in sentences is excellent. When given opportunities to do so, pupils demonstrate success in applying their skills to problem-solving exercises and relish these activities. Pupils cite more active, hands-on lessons as their preferred way of learning. In questionnaires, almost all pupils felt that their teachers are supportive.
- 3.7 Pupils' communication skills are excellent. Their listening skills are highly developed, and they listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. Pupils recognise and speak confidently about the rapid progress they make when developing their reading skills and cite books they have enjoyed along the way. Pupils articulate their explanations extremely well, for example when explaining their understanding of the death of Queen Victoria's son, Leopold, and their desire to find out more about haemophilia. When addressing their class, pupils speak extremely clearly and confidently. Pupils clearly love the numerous opportunities that are provided for them to develop their confidence in speaking publicly, including a strong focus on preparation for nationally recognised public speaking examinations. Written work is consistently well-presented, detailed and imaginative. Year 3 pupils' writing is very well constructed and often features excellent use of expressive vocabulary, and Year 6 writing is highly expressive, demonstrating excellent use of a wide range of writing techniques across a range of subjects. Handwriting is of a high standard from an early age.
- 3.8 Pupils' numeracy skills are well-developed and good progress is achieved in lessons and over time. They demonstrate an enjoyment of mathematical thinking and engage keenly in its application across a range of subjects. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about working out the length of kings' and queens' reigns in history, using coordinates in geography, and creating graphs in science. Children in the EYFS develop strong numeracy skills through daily opportunities to engage in counting activities, such as when working out how many would be in the class if one person was missing. Year 6 pupils worked confidently, showing a genuine interest and enthusiasm for investigative work involving probability when rolling dice.
- 3.9 Pupils' information communication technology (ICT) skills are good. Whilst the school's resources are less well-developed in this area, pupils in Year 4 worked confidently when developing a sales flyer using presentation software and pupils in Year 5 researched information on Eastern Europe using a weather website. Year 6 pupils showed good investigative skills in planning and researching a European trip in which they had to deal with budgets and online travel bookings. Pupils further expand their ICT skills in after-school clubs.
- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate the ability to hypothesise, analyse and synthesise, responding well in lessons where they are given the opportunity to tackle open-ended, problem-solving tasks. When studying

castles in Key Stage 1, pupils undertook their own research which resulted in the successful construction of castles in a wide variety of forms. In the EYFS, children choose their own group and independent activities, and are confident in tackling new challenges, such as when developing their writing skills through the application of their knowledge of spelling and phonics. Year 3 pupils articulated intelligent predictions of what might happen next if their book character consumed the contents of an old medicine jar. However, lessons are often more closed in nature, allowing pupils to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills, but less effective in enabling them to develop their higher-order thinking skills.

- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate a good level of focus, self-discipline and engagement in their lessons in response to the positive relationships between pupils and teachers which is evident throughout the school. They engage with high levels of motivation and enthusiasm, as seen in a Year 3 games lesson focusing on athletics. From an early age, pupils concentrate very well in lessons, showing consideration for others in discussions, and great respect for their teachers. Children in the EYFS demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning in an easy, free-flowing manner. They are curious and keen to investigate the various activities provided for them including finding pictures in a sand pit, creating objects using play dough, creating stories in a toy farmyard and matching animals and their offspring using cards. They work well collaboratively and readily take responsibility for their learning when lesson planning allows this type of activity. However, their development in these areas is limited by lessons which do not foster creativity, exploration or independence in their learning. Whilst pupils are highly focused on their lessons, they relish and benefit from the opportunities they have to engage more actively.
- 3.12 Pupils are encouraged to expand their interests beyond the classroom through a range of extra-curricular activities. They demonstrate good levels of extra-curricular achievement both in school and beyond. Pupils expressed their clear enjoyment of their varied experiences in current affairs, martial arts, art club, archery, computing, nature club, Spanish and cricket. In the arts, a number of pupils celebrate success in music examinations, and in nationally recognised speaking exams, pupils regularly and consistently achieve high results, nearly half achieving the very highest outcomes. This well-honed skill is evident throughout the curriculum where pupils speak with character, expression and clarity. Pupils enjoy their involvement in sports fixtures including football, netball, hockey, athletics and cross country, and beyond the school gates, pupils achieve awards, medals and certificates in a variety of activities including drama, rugby, football and swimming.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate an excellent sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. Development of their self-knowledge is extremely strong as demonstrated in discussions and lessons. They are purposeful and effective in managing their own readiness for learning and speak openly of the progress they have made over time and the skills required to make improvements to their outcomes. Pupils accept that failure is a positive aspect of learning and in doing so, develop a strong sense of self-awareness. For example, in a French lesson, Year 6 pupils described where they lived, how old they were and named the days of the week, and pupils' books often feature thoughtful self-evaluation. Resilience, one of the school's values, is developed across all ages and pupils recognise the benefits of the school's approach to 'having a go'. Almost all parents feel the school equips their children with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.
- 3.15 Pupils have good decision-making skills. Where they are given opportunities to make decisions in their learning, they respond positively. For example, in a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lesson, pupils reflected thoughtfully and maturely about risk-taking and choices that help minimise social, emotional and physical risks. Pupils were pleased to have been able to influence the choice of activities through their house meetings. From an early age, children make decisions about which toys to use, and which direction to take their own playtime stories. In discussions, they

appreciate that making decisions contributes to them being motivated and effective learners. The well-resourced classrooms, their teachers' support, and small class sizes, ensure pupils feel safe and supported in making decisions.

- 3.16 Pupils have a good level of spiritual awareness which can be partly attributed to the rich PSHE and religious education curriculum. Year 6 pupils spoke of 'wow' moments of deep questioning about life experiences and texts studied, as well as valuing opportunities to reflect. Year 5 pupils discussed the concept of worship and demonstrated thoughtful reflection on the notion of who or what might be worthy of worship status. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the emotional effect they experienced when watching a PSHE video about protected characteristics. Current affairs discussions help pupils develop a growing knowledge of the world around them, and pupils demonstrated a sense of awe and wonder when involved in a scavenger hunt in the local area.
- 3.17 Behaviour within the school is excellent and pupils show great respect towards everyone in the school community. They understand the need to be considerate to one another, taking turns and treating each other kindly. They are keenly aware of the consequences in place for any breaches of this excellent behaviour and are keen to repair any broken relationships quickly and maturely. In a Year 3 English lesson, pupils' discussion of making the right choices demonstrated a clear understanding of how wrong decisions might have consequences. This approach is embedded from the youngest years exemplified when children in the EYFS were seen asking politely for resources and saying thank you. Pupils and staff spoke overwhelmingly positively about the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils throughout the school and in questionnaires, almost all parents feel the school actively promotes good behaviour and that the school listens and responds to the views of pupils.
- 3.18 From the youngest age, pupils show an excellent level of social collaboration and respect for each other. Throughout the school, pupils work well together regardless of age and ability. For example, in mathematics, English, French, PE and art, pupils can decide to work with a variety of partners. Pupils spoke warmly about knowing each other irrespective of year groups. They form productive relationships towards a common goal, for example, during the school's *Commonwealth Games* when groups consisted of pupils from all year groups. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about their roles looking after younger children. Pupils were observed working effectively in pairs in a wide variety of activities and discussed the merits of this with inspectors. Year 3 pupils conducted surveys within the class to produce bar charts based on their own choice of topics. Pupils take turns as a matter of course and relish opportunities to congratulate each other.
- 3.19 Pupils' contribution to others, the school and wider community is excellent. Older pupils are aware of the need to be role models and their proactive involvement in the house system enables them to make a positive impact on the lives of all pupils. They are eager to support and help younger children and all pupils are kind and welcoming to visitors, as observed during the inspection when a number of new pupils joined the school for the day. Their membership of, and participation in, house meetings and activities are valued highly by all pupils. They take part in many charitable initiatives to support the wider community, for example, organising cake sales, arranging non-uniform days, manning stalls and running laps round the local sports field. Pupils contribute to a number of national and international charities supporting families, for example in Africa and Ukraine. Senior pupils enjoy the responsibility of raising funds and engaging the support of adults and younger pupils. They are enthusiastically keen to contribute to the school community further through their passionate involvement in sports fixtures and school productions.
- 3.20 Pupils show high levels of respect for each other, their own cultures and those of others. They demonstrate an excellent level of sensitivity and tolerance, recognising people's differences but stating it is not a topic they feel the need to discuss often as everyone is comfortable in their community. Pupils with SEND are encouraged to be independent learners within the classroom and pupils are supportive of each other's needs. Year 5 pupils consider the assimilation of cultures from the former British Empire and the importance of the rule of law on the legal systems of countries around the world. Pupils expressed their enjoyment of studying world religions and the lives of people

from around the world, such as learning about the Maasai people of Kenya in Year 2. Year 4 pupils showed good knowledge of Buddhism and were able to make mature contributions to work on comparative religions. Year 6 pupils' mature awareness of different culture has been fostered through the discussion of food and recipes from home which has also led to the production of a multicultural recipe book. In the questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of parents feel the school treats children fairly, regardless of their sex, faith, race or needs, and that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.

- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding about staying safe online and know who to turn to if they are concerned. They speak positively about the role that PSHE and assemblies play in raising their awareness of online safety and could explain to inspectors the dos and don'ts of online behaviour in great detail. The PSHE programme also plays an important part in helping pupils to acquire a good understanding of relationships, how to manage their changing bodies and the concept of consent. Pupils understand the importance of being physically healthy and they value the opportunities they have to participate in games lessons on the nearby field. They appreciate the value of healthy eating and make sensible choices about what they eat at lunchtimes. Whilst some pupils and parents commented on the quality of school lunches, inspectors found that the rotating menus provide a suitable range of healthy options. Good mental health is encouraged through conversations, for example, pupils demonstrated excellent understanding about the difference between secrets and nice surprises. Most parents feel the school encourages their children to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The school provides an environment where pupils feel safe and secure both in and out of the classroom.

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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registrations. 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

Mr Alexander Mitchell

Reporting inspector

Mrs Virginia Jackson

Compliance team inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Mr Grant Whitaker

Team inspector (Former Director of Studies, IAPS school)