



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

PENNTHORPE SCHOOL

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Pennthorpe School

Full Name of School	Pennthorpe School
DfE Number	938/6026
Registered Charity Number	307043
Address	Pennthorpe School Church Street Rudgwick Horsham West Sussex RH12 3HJ
Telephone Number	01403 822391
Email Address	mking@pennthorpe.com
Headmaster	Mr Matthew King
Chair of Governors	Mr Mark Lucas
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	287
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (178 boys; 109 girls)
Number of EYFS Children	67
Ownership and Governance	The school is a charitable educational trust administered by a board of governors.
School Structure	It is divided into three sections: the Early Years (consisting of children aged two to five years), the Lower School (pupils aged five to nine) and the Upper School (pupils aged nine to thirteen).
Inspection Dates	06 Oct 2015 to 07 Oct 2015

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, this inspection records whether the school complies with each of these Regulations, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Compliance is judged both by written formulation and by implementation. The Regulations represent minimum requirements and are given as either 'met' or not 'met'.

Additionally, inspections consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the Education (Abolition of Corporal Punishment) (Independent Schools) Regulations 1989.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. For children aged from two to five, this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations and related aspects of the EYFS Statutory Framework.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) the school's aims, detailed coverage of the quality of educational provision or pupils' achievement;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (iv) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures;
- (v) an investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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

The report reflects the evidence used in deciding whether the school's provision meets or does not meet the various requirements. Grades are not provided for the quality of the school as a whole or for each aspect inspected.

If the school has EYFS registered provision (for children under the age of two), reports use the same evaluative terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.

National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with a group of governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

INSPECTORS

Mrs Jane Chesterfield	Reporting Inspector
Mr Edward Stothard	Compliance Team Inspector (Bursar, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Pennthorpe School is a preparatory day school for girls and boys aged from two to thirteen years. It is situated in a rural location in the village of Rudgwick, near Horsham in West Sussex. The school was founded in Kent in 1930 and moved to its current location in 1948. It is a registered charity run by a limited company trust and directed by a governing body. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision to children aged two years upwards in its Nursery and Reception classes.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has been divided into three sections (Early Years, Lower School and Upper School) and introduced the role of the head of EYFS. A new performing arts studio has been created, and seven acres of woodland have been purchased to develop an outdoor learning programme.
- 1.3 Currently 177 boys and 110 girls attend the school. Pupils come from mainly professional or business backgrounds, and a small proportion is from minority ethnic or overseas backgrounds.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY STANDARDS

Part 1 Quality of education provided

Curriculum

- 2.1 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.2 The school has, and implements, a comprehensive curriculum policy which is supported in practice by thorough schemes of work and planning. These take into account fully the ages, needs and aptitudes of the pupils, and show how pupils' personal development will be nurtured. Arrangements do not undermine the characteristic features of Britishness such as democracy, the rule of law and tolerance. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that their children have access to a broad curriculum. [Paragraph 2(1)]
- 2.3 From Year 1 to Year 8, pupils are offered a wide-ranging curriculum designed to provide a thorough grounding in literacy, numeracy and computer studies, and enabling them to acquire the relevant skills linked to these. This is enhanced with an effective coverage of science, the humanities, the arts, sport and modern foreign languages. Pupils learn French throughout the school and start Spanish or German before they leave. A diverse selection of extra-curricular activities is also offered. [Paragraph 2(2)(a) & (b)]
- 2.4 A carefully planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is timetabled throughout the school at an age-appropriate level. Pupils from Year 5 upwards receive individual advice and support on their choice of senior school, and pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 are introduced to the topic of careers options. [Paragraph 2(2)(d) & (e)]
- 2.5 In the EYFS, planning covers the required seven areas of learning in depth, with an appropriate focus on the three prime areas, particularly for the youngest children. Rooms are set up with engaging and stimulating activities which cover all areas of learning effectively, indoors and outside. Careful attention is given to the needs of all individuals. [Paragraph 2(2)(f)]
- 2.6 Pupils of all ages are provided the opportunity to learn and make progress, and to understand the responsibilities of life in British society. Year 8 PSHEE, for example, includes topics covering democracy and the law, moving to senior school, drug awareness, and money, personal finance and careers. [Paragraph 2(g)(2)(h) & (i)]

Teaching

- 2.7 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.8 Teaching enables pupils to acquire new skills and make good progress in line with their ability. They develop their knowledge and understanding as a result. [Paragraph 3(a)]
- 2.9 Teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge for their subjects, and their careful lesson planning, based on a thorough understanding of pupils' needs and prior attainment, motivate the pupils and encourage them to apply themselves to their tasks. The range of teaching methods and the quality of resources used to support learning, particularly modern technology, help to make lessons lively and stimulating. Pupils'

progress is regularly assessed in lessons, and the policy for marking pupils’ work is consistently applied. Pupils report that they understand the use of green or purple pen by teachers in their books, and know that they must respond to comments and targets. [Paragraph 3(b)(c)(d)(e)(f) & (g)]

- 2.10 Expectations for behaviour in lessons are high, and pupils respond positively to these, and as a result teachers do not have to waste time establishing order. Traditional values of equality, respect and tolerance are inherent throughout the school, and pupils do not experience any discrimination. [Paragraph 3(h)(i) & (j)]
- 2.11 In the EYFS, children benefit from individualised support based on their particular needs and stages of development. Care is taken to build on children’s prior knowledge and lead them to the next step in their learning. Two year olds, for example, enjoyed exploring the use of colour and pattern while finger painting. [Paragraph 3]
- 2.12 Throughout the school, pupils’ performance is systematically assessed at regular intervals, using online and standardised tests. In the EYFS, the required two-year checks and the end of key stage profile are carried out appropriately. Testing at all stages of the school is used to guide future planning. [Paragraph 4]

How well do pupils achieve?

Pupils’ Ability	The results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average, although with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented.
Pupils’ Needs	Sixty-three pupils require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They require support with a range of needs including dyslexia and similar difficulties with literacy. None has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has identified 126 pupils who are gifted academically or who are talented in areas such as sport, drama and music.
Pupils’ Achievements	The pupils’ attainment is not measured by national tests but by the school’s own framework.

Part 2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.13 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.14 The school actively promotes British values in its everyday life and activities. The Harvest Festival which took place during the inspection, for example, showed how pupils respect and care for others through their gifts for a local foodbank. Year 8 pupils, meanwhile, told inspectors of their recent visit to the Houses of Parliament and their discussions on topics including mental health, racism and public transport as a result of this. [Paragraph 5(a)]
- 2.15 Pupils are confident, polite and respectful in their dealings with others. They take on responsibility and develop an understanding of British institutions through the school

council and the charity committee. Pupils were able to explain to inspectors the principle of the secret ballot through the 'blindfold voting', which they use to elect council members. A very small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that their views are not always listened to by the school. Inspection evidence indicated that pupils had appropriate channels to express their ideas or seek help for academic or personal difficulties. Older pupils understood that it was not always possible to act on their ideas. A suggested 'pets in school' day, for example, was not possible because of allergies. [Paragraph 5(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi) & (vii)]

- 2.16 Pupils develop an insight into other cultures and display tolerance for and interest in these. They study a range of religions including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Buddhism as they move through the school. Staff take care to ensure that different views are presented in a non-partisan way, and visiting speakers are carefully selected and monitored. [Paragraph 5(b)(v),(c) & (d)]
- 2.17 Children in the EYFS are happy, secure and settled. They are confident in their surroundings and readily turn to known adults for support, eager to explore their environment and learning to appreciate the needs of others. [Paragraph 5(b)]

What are pupils' views of the school?

Pupils are asked to respond as 'agree' or 'disagree' with the option to specify 'no view' or not to answer individual questions. One hundred and five pupils responded to part or all of the questionnaire. The table below shows the proportions of pupils who responded 'agree' or 'disagree' in relation to each question, and the number who didn't offer a view.

	% Agree	% Disagree	Number offering no view
1. I enjoy school	97	2	7
2. I find my lessons interesting and engaging	94	5	8
3. The school gives me the support I need to learn	100	0	3
4. I can get help if I need it	97	2	6
5. The school encourages me to do my best	96	3	4
6. I feel safe and happy at school	94	6	5
7. My views and ideas are listened to in class and in school	86	13	11
8. Behaviour is good in the school	93	6	11
9. Teachers are fair in the way they give rewards	78	21	17
10. Teachers are fair in the way they give sanctions	74	25	20
11. The school deals with bullying	83	16	13
12. There is a member of staff or senior pupil I can turn to if I have a problem	94	5	10

Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.18 The school does not meet all of the Regulations.
- 2.19 Since the previous inspection the school has not consistently carry out all required recruitment checks in line with government guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education. References have not always been taken up in advance of the employment of new members of staff, and previous employment histories have not always been checked. [Paragraph 7(a) & (b)]

- 2.20 The school's policy for safeguarding meets requirements and is made available to parents and staff. Concerns about pupils are handled carefully and passed to the appropriate authorities. Training for staff is up to date and pupils are taught appropriately about keeping safe. This includes e-safety. A lead practitioner has responsibility for safeguarding in the EYFS, and the policy covers the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting. All staff have completed declarations regarding 'disqualification by association'. [Paragraph 7 (a) & (b)]
- 2.21 The school's behaviour policy was observed to be implemented effectively throughout the school. Any poor behaviour is systematically logged and tracked. A small minority of pupils and parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel that behaviour is well managed. Examination of behaviour records found that appropriate and proportionate action is taken in the event of misbehavior. A small minority of pupils also felt that rewards and sanctions are not administered fairly. Discussion with pupils found that some feel that well-behaved pupils have to do more to earn merit points, or 'pluses', than those who find it more difficult to behave well. However, they did understand why such pupils need to be encouraged. [Paragraph 9]
- 2.22 The anti-bullying policy is comprehensive and is well known to pupils, who say they know who to turn to if they have a problem. A small minority of pupils and parents responding to the questionnaire did not feel that the school deals effectively with bullying. Inspection evidence found that incidents are catalogued in detail and handled in line with stated procedures, with appropriate involvement of parents. The Inspection also determined that channels for reporting bullying and strategies for supporting pupils were suitable. [Paragraph 10]
- 2.23 Health and safety matters are given due attention, and risk assessments are now consistently followed, in accordance with the action point raised at the previous inspection. The school is refining its systems for monitoring and reviewing risk assessments. Fire procedures are appropriate, and fire drills are carried out regularly. [Paragraphs 11, 12 & 16]
- 2.24 Many staff are trained in first aid, and all EYFS staff have paediatric first aid training. First aid equipment is appropriately located around the school. Pupils are effectively supervised around the school and its grounds, and the correct ratios of adults to children are applied for the different age groups in the EYFS. [Paragraphs 13 & 14]
- 2.25 Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored, and registrations are carried out appropriately. The school applies its admission policy consistently. [Paragraph 15]

Other legislation

- 2.26 The school has an appropriate plan for improving accessibility for pupils with SEND, which is implemented effectively.
- 2.27 The school firmly rejects the use of corporal punishment in its behaviour policy

Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- 2.28 The school does not meet all of the Regulations.
- 2.29 The required recruitment checks on staff have not always been undertaken sufficiently thoroughly. In particular, the school has not understood the need to carry out a separate barred list check when an employee's DBS check has not arrived before they start work, nor the need to carry out a new barred list check when an employee brings with them a DBS check from their previous employment. Missing barred list checks have been instigated as a result of the inspection. Checks of identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom and qualifications, where appropriate, are in place. Overseas checks are undertaken when necessary. [Paragraph 18]
- 2.30 Appropriate checks on governors have been carried out. Supply staff from an agency are not currently used by the school. [Paragraphs 19 and 20]
- 2.31 The single central register of appointments has not always been accurately completed, with a number of checks incorrectly recorded or omitted. In particular, the school has not systematically recorded the dates of barred list checks, when these have been carried out as part of the DBS check. The school has also occasionally replaced the date of an initial DBS check with that of an updated check, and as a result it is not always clear that an employee had been checked when they started work. [Paragraph 21]

Part 5 Premises and accommodation

- 2.32 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.33 Toilet facilities are appropriate for the number and age of the pupils, including the children in the EYFS. Suitable nappy-changing facilities are provided for the youngest children. Showers are available for the older pupils to use after sport, and these afford acceptable levels of privacy. [Paragraph 23]
- 2.34 A comfortable room is provided for the medical examination and treatment of pupils, where they may rest under supervision until collected by parents. This room contains a washbasin and is next door to toilet facilities. [Paragraph 24]
- 2.35 The school takes care to ensure that its accommodation is suitably maintained and that procedures exist to report and remedy any defects. Classrooms, offices and other rooms inside the school are appropriately lit, and acoustics ensure that others are not disturbed by activities taking place in each room. External lighting is sufficient to promote safety around the site. [Paragraphs 25, 26, and 27]
- 2.36 Water supplies to toilets and showers are at an appropriate temperature and drinking water facilities are plentiful. These facilities were correctly labelled by the end of the inspection. [Paragraph 28]
- 2.37 The school's grounds are extensive, providing pupils with plenty of space to play and to enjoy physical education lessons. Suitably enclosed and equipped areas are provided for the EYFS children to learn outdoors. [Paragraph 29]

Part 6 Provision of information

2.38 The school meets the Regulations.

2.39 Parents are provided with all required information through the school website and a comprehensive range of printed leaflets and brochures. Modern technology is used extensively to keep parents up to date about the school and their children. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that they receive timely replies to their queries. Suitable reports to parents are provided regularly throughout the school year. The required progress checks on children in the EYFS are fully reported to parents when their children are two years old and at the end of the Reception year. [Paragraph 32]

Part 7 Manner in which complaints are handled

2.40 The school meets the Regulations.

2.41 The school's complaints procedure meets requirements and is available to parents on its website, and school records show that complaints are dealt with in accordance with this procedure. Records are detailed and show that complaints are taken seriously and handled with appropriate consideration. Over the last academic year, two formal complaints were recorded, but were resolved before the panel stage. [Paragraph 33]

Part 8 Quality of leadership and management

2.42 The school meets the Regulations.

2.43 Those responsible for leadership, management and governance have ensured that the action point from the last inspection has been addressed, though new areas of non-compliance have arisen since then, as outlined above. Pupils' well-being is actively promoted on a day-to-day basis and senior leaders are aware of what they need to do in order to meet regulations. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, pupils said that they feel encouraged and supported, and know how to get help if they need it, and parents felt that their children are well looked after and safe. Leadership, management and governance of the EYFS ensure that children are happy and settled in their environment. Staff ratios are appropriate and staff supervision is in place. [Paragraph 34]

What are parents' views of the school?

Parents are asked to respond as 'agree' or 'disagree' with the option to specify 'no view' or not to answer individual questions. Seventy-three parents responded to part or all of the questionnaire. The table below shows the proportions of parents who responded 'agree' or 'disagree' in relation to each question, and the number who didn't offer a view.

	% Agree	% Disagree	Number offering no view
1. My child is happy at the school.	98	1	0
2. My child is making good progress at the school.	91	8	2
3. My child feels safe at the school.	98	1	1
4. My child is well looked after at the school.	100	0	2
5. The school actively promotes good behaviour.	91	8	2
6. There is someone for my child to go to if problems arise in	98	1	1

the school.			
7. The school welcomes my views.	94	5	2
8. The school deals well with bullying.	76	23	21
9. Behaviour is well managed.	84	15	0
10. I receive good information about my child's progress, the school's policies and activities/events.	93	6	1
11. I receive timely responses to my questions, concerns and complaints.	95	4	1
12. My child has access to a broad curriculum.	97	2	1
13. My child's individual educational needs are being met at school.	93	6	1
14. I would recommend the school to another parent.	91	8	2

3. SUMMARY OF REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

	All requirements met?
Part 1 Quality of education provided (curriculum)	Yes
Part 1 Quality of education provided (teaching)	Yes
Part 2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	Yes
Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils, including Other legislation	No
Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors	No
Part 5 Premises and accommodation	Yes
Part 6 Provision of information	Yes
Part 7 Manner in which complaints are handled	Yes
Part 8 Quality of leadership and management	Yes

Action points

3.1 The school does not meet all the regulatory requirements, and therefore it must take the following action.

- Obtain references in advance of the appointment of all new members of staff and check their previous employment history [Part 3, Paragraph 7(a) and (b)].
- Undertake all required recruitment checks in a timely manner, particularly those for the barred list for staff whose DBS checks are delayed or who are bringing with them a DBS from a previous employment [Part 4, Paragraph 18(2)(a)].
- Maintain the single central register of appointments accurately and completely to show all required checks, particularly those for the barred list and the dates of original DBS checks [Part 4, Paragraph 21(3)(a)(ii)].

The school will be required to produce an Action Plan for the Department for Education to set out how it intends to resolve the issues listed above.

Progress since the previous inspection

3.2 The action point from the previous inspection was to ensure that all risk assessments are consistently and rigorously adhered to in all parts of the school. This has been effectively addressed. The school is refining systems for making sure that all risk assessments are consistently reviewed by senior staff.