



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Sussex House School

October 2019



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School's Details

School	Sussex House School			
DfE number	207/6096			
Registered charity number	1035806			
Address	Sussex House School 68 Cadogan Square London SW1X 0EA			
Telephone number	020 75841741			
Email address	registrar@sussexhouseschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Nicholas Kaye			
Chair of governors	Mr John Crewe			
Age range	8 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	184			
	EYFS	0	Juniors	113
	Seniors	71	Sixth Form	0
Inspection dates	01 to 03 October 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Sussex House School is an independent day school for boys aged between 8 and 13 years. The school was founded in 1952 and since 1994, the school has been an independent charitable trust. The current headmaster was promoted to his current position from the position of deputy head in 1994. A board of trustees is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the running of the school, supported by a team of advisory governors. The Headmaster is one of five trustees of the charitable trust.
- 1.2 Most teaching takes place in the main five-storey building, while an adjacent hall provides facilities for music and a gymnasium. The school has no outdoor space but uses local facilities for games and recreation.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has made new appointments to the senior management team and has enhanced its provision for information and communications technology (ICT).

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to create an inspirational environment in which there is a sense of striving for learning, creativity and sporting achievement and in which pupils can feel a strong sense of belonging and personal involvement. It seeks to discern ability and talent and provide opportunities for unhindered development.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Most pupils come from families with professional and business backgrounds living within a five-mile radius of the school. The pupils reflect the ethnic diversity of central London. Data provided by the school indicates that the ability of pupils is above the national average. The school has no pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 29 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia; 17 of these receive additional specialist help. There are 28 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), with one requiring additional support. The school has identified 39 pupils as being its most able, for whom the curriculum is modified.

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) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. 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 **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 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: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [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 associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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. They also include 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 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.

2.18 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'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
2 nd Form	Year 4
3 rd Form	Year 5
4 th Form	Year 6
5 th Form	Year 7
6 th Form	Year 8

Key findings

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

- Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their learning which are made possible by their respect for their teachers and the environment in which they learn.
- Pupils are extremely confident and articulate communicators, with a strong mastery of grammar and vocabulary.
- They have strong numeric skills and can apply these consistently well to all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils have well-developed observational and thinking skills and show excellent ability in hypothesising, analysing and in synthesising of new information.

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

- Pupils are highly tolerant and respectful of each other, appreciating the qualities conferred by the diversity of the school community.
- Pupils display high degrees of self-confidence and maturity.
- Pupils have a very well-developed spiritual awareness and support and value each other extremely well.
- Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are particularly strong.

Recommendations

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Creating further opportunities for pupils to undertake responsibility and to engage autonomously and collaboratively, so that they may experience wider opportunities to contribute positively to the lives of others in the school, the wider community and those less fortunate than themselves.
- Supporting pupils' development of a healthy lifestyle by increasing the time available for them to eat their lunches and to use outdoor space for recreation and play.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 The school's leadership is successful in meeting its aims of creating an inspirational environment in which there is a sense of striving for learning, creativity and sporting achievement. This was acknowledged in questionnaires, where all parents and very nearly all pupils agreed that teaching enables pupils to make progress and to develop skills for the future and by the large number of highly positive parental and pupil comments. Although the school uses external tests in parallel with its own measurements of attainment, the absence of a robust system means that pupils' progress is not consistently tracked. However, the evidence from lessons and written work shows that pupils of all ability groups make good progress in their lessons and are able to elaborate on the development in their attainment over time.

3.6 Pupils show high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all the subjects, for example as seen in knowledge of coastal erosion processes by older pupils on their geography field trip project, younger pupils' excellent understanding of mental arithmetic techniques and in the excellent design and fine motor skills evident in pupils' scale model constructions of Victorian buildings. However, pupils are not always able to practise investigatory and creative skills in some cases where instructions are more formulaic. Pupils are very knowledgeable and extremely well-read. Their grasp of English grammar is strong, and they show themselves to be highly effective learners when offered the

opportunity to analyse, synthesise and apply their understanding. Pupils of higher ability achieved exceptional results and displayed excellent higher-order thinking when lessons were fast-paced and the direction of learning was guided by the pupils' interest. Pupils are highly observant, as witnessed, for example, in a chemistry lesson on analysis of metal reactivity.

- 3.7 Pupils have excellent communication skills. They are highly articulate and able to express their thinking and feeling extremely effectively and succinctly. As they progress through the school, they acquire a rich range of vocabulary in spoken English and the ability to construct cogent and logical argument. They are able to provide well-reasoned responses to searching questions, as seen in examples of original poetry and creative writing of a technical quality which is well above age-related expectations, due to the ambitious curriculum and teaching which sets high expectations. Pupils described their ability to communicate feelings also through their music and artwork. Their written work is well developed and often demonstrates a mature and thoughtful response to extremely effective use of open questioning. Pupils enjoy the challenges of demanding texts and confidently engage in play readings in class. Pupils' creative writing is of very high quality: the development of sometimes very complex ideas reflects a wealth of creativity and linguistic awareness as noted in scrutiny of their work. They also listen attentively in class and possess a wide technical vocabulary for specific subjects, for example during a music lesson studying Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Their mature understanding of language allows them to analyse texts with great proficiency. Subsequently, when they are given the opportunity, the quality of their discussion in class is exemplary.
- 3.8 Pupils display strong mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding across all age and ability groups. Their mental arithmetic skills develop early and are of a high order; they are able to elaborate on clear explanations of alternative methods for solving problems as seen in a mathematics lesson with younger pupils, and are adept in areas such as algebra, geometry and number-work, as evidenced in scrutiny of work. Pupils' computational accuracy is excellent; they work methodically and with care in mathematics lessons and their success is driven partly by a strong foundation knowledge of numeracy. Their ability to apply these fundamental principles during extended challenges to solve increasingly complex problems is a strong feature of their learning. However, in a minority of lessons where pupils of all abilities are given the same work, their learning is not always extended effectively, and different ability groups achieve more limited success.
- 3.9 Pupils acquire good skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). They express confidence in their developing abilities in coding, word-processing, presentation and use of spreadsheets, for example in older pupils' geography project work and eco-house assignments, as well as enthusiasm for design projects such as a 3D-printed egg-cracking machine.
- 3.10 Pupils' study skills are a strength and continue to develop as they progress through the school. They show particularly high abilities in the skills of hypothesis, analysis and synthesis, as evidenced in a debate between older pupils on the effects of social media on society, and in considering the cause and effects of the Haiti earthquake. Pupils are academically able, and many achieve excellent levels for their age across the curriculum. They also have strengths in sporting, musical and creative arts subjects and the school's leadership has been successful in developing these areas. Pupils are also able to analyse information very well and hypothesise and synthesise concepts with great clarity as was observed in a history lesson on the Bayeux Tapestry. Their strong ability to draw upon a wide range of general knowledge to extend their own learning and the learning of others is a notable trait. In the best examples, pupils display excellent learning responses due to fast-paced lessons which make use of challenging open-ended questioning. At times when lessons are planned less flexibly, pupils' learning is consequently less expansive.
- 3.11 Pupils of all ability groups and learning needs are diligently prepared for and hence are very successful in competitive entry tests, including some scholarship examinations, to a range of selective senior schools. Pupils also enjoy success in sport and the creative arts, through the opportunities that are offered both in the formal curriculum but also through an extensive extra-curricular programme. They describe the sense of satisfaction they experience from performing in musical and dramatic

productions and concerts, as well as the simple joy of interpreting a musical piece where no grade examinations are necessary. Pupils achieve exceptional results in practical music and drama examinations, including success at performance diploma and grade 8 distinction level. Pupils' achievements in fencing are also a particular strength; they benefit from the school's tradition of excellence in a sport in which the school has been national school champions for over three decades. The annual architectural-modelling competition showcases many excellent examples of pupils' meticulous attention to detail, creativity and collaboration.

- 3.12 Pupils display excellent attitudes to their learning, as seen in nearly all lessons observed. They show high levels of creativity, initiative and independence. They are able to work both individually with persistence, and collaboratively. Pupils are motivated to achieve. Pupils are highly appreciative of their teachers and commented, in questionnaires, on the strong mutual respect that they enjoy. They also commented that teachers are generous with their time and supportive whenever they experience difficulty in their learning. Pupils are willing to take risks to extend their learning and stated that they saw failure as something of which they should not be afraid. Pupils clearly value their learning environment, share a universal enthusiasm for their learning and grasp the opportunities that they are given.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils display excellent levels of self-esteem and self-confidence across all ages in the school. They approach adults with ease and speak with pride of their achievements, hopes and dreams. All parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent. Pupils are clear in their desire to give of their best in all areas, supported by the school's high expectations and consistent guidance. Their self-confidence and sense of self is well developed. Pupils are aware of their strengths and also know which areas they will need to work on to improve their own learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to achieve. They enjoy challenges and relish hard work. They are aware of opportunities in their learning environment and the qualities that lead to successful learning, including open-mindedness, resilience and self-discipline. Pupils accept and welcome challenges, seeing these as opportunities rather than limitations.
- 3.15 Pupils describe, with pride, their ability to make their own decisions and their understanding of the effects this can have on their lives, whether this involves a group decision, such as which Shakespeare play to study, or individual considerations such as whether to stay late in school to learn a new skill such as coding. Nearly all pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that they are encouraged to think and learn for themselves. When given the opportunity, they feel confident to take risks and are not afraid of making mistakes; they value the ability to make decisions of this nature and see this as liberating. This is particularly evident where lessons are structured to permit pupils the freedom to direct their own learning and less so where teaching is more directive. They show a well-developed awareness of how important their entrance examinations and future schools will be to their overall life and will readily explain what they need to do to improve. They value the space and time given by their teachers that creates an open environment in which to seek help or assurance. They also recognise the potential to develop new skills and interests through the extra-curricular programme and the importance of taking these opportunities.
- 3.16 Pupils are able to elaborate, clearly, on the less materialistic aspects of life. They value the spirituality inherent in experiences such as music and creative art and show an openness and astuteness in their observations and reflections. They described, variously, examples such as awe and inspiration from the colours in a stained-glass window, the emotions conveyed by pieces of artwork and from listening to a full choir performance in a concert hall. Pupils display a strong spiritual understanding which is in large part driven by the Christian life of the school. Pupils are challenged and inspired to develop

themselves personally and intellectually due to the very well-established opportunities for prayer, the spiritual language and the liturgy that pervades much of the life of the school.

- 3.17 Pupils are impeccably behaved, showing great respect for themselves, each other, adults and their surroundings. They are able to regulate their own behaviour very well, supported by the school's pastoral care system which encourages and exemplifies the high standards of empathetic self-discipline observed during the inspection visit. They understand the effect that poor behaviour can have on others and express their appreciation of their good fortune in being able to experience the excellent ethos of respect for all that is prevalent in the school. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong and readily shared their desire to please their teachers and parents by ensuring they always behaved well. Pupils are kind to each other and are generous in their praise of each other's strengths. They demonstrate a clear responsibility for their own behaviour and are able to articulate a strong sense of morality. Pupils consequently feel confident to deal with emerging issues in the knowledge that the school's expectations are both clear and actively supported. Pupils also display a genuine humility with regard to their achievements and gratitude for the opportunities afforded by the school in general and particularly the larger ensemble groups to which they contribute.
- 3.18 Pupils relate to each other and to adults extremely well. They realise the benefits of working together and do so eagerly in their learning whenever the opportunity presents itself. They describe their enjoyment of working collaboratively in endeavours such as the school's Dragon's Den competition and in musical and dramatic productions. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to work with their peers on shared initiatives such as the eco-house project. When they are given the chance to do so, pupils are able to work very effectively in collaboration and willingly offer the space for each other to contribute effectively. The school's leadership has been successful in its aim of creating an environment in which pupils can feel a strong sense of belonging and personal involvement.
- 3.19 Older pupils welcome the opportunity to help others by taking on voluntary roles such as being 'churchwardens' for the weekly service, or in offering to stay after school to assist in events such as prospective parents' evenings. Pupils also described their appreciation of fund-raising events but are not able to participate as much as they would like in the organisation of these. Older pupils at school all benefit from performing their prefect duties, as they have opportunities to build their conflict resolution skills; their work with younger pupils strengthens the links between themselves and younger pupils in the school. Pupils described their enjoyment participating in musical concerts held in local venues and the fact that these can be attended and enjoyed by the public. They explained, clearly, that school fund-raising activities enable support of their linked school in Ethiopia. However, they stated that there are few opportunities for them to lead activities which will be of benefit to the school or wider community. Pupils nevertheless recognise and value both the opportunities they are offered and also the fact that others are a great deal less fortunate than they are.
- 3.20 Pupils show profound respect and tolerance for others, reflecting the diversity of faiths and cultures in the school population. They described how differences between them are of no consequence and also their appreciation of an environment which promotes care and empathy for all. Pupils demonstrate a very positive and open response to difference in the school community and celebrate these. They learn about the festivals and traditions of other faiths from each other in assemblies and PSHE lessons and show a keen interest in finding out more about other cultures. They value opportunities and can confidently compare the similarities and shared experiences of major religions. The school inculcates a strong sense of mutual respect for people of different faiths and pupils volunteer to give presentations on major feast days, for example, recently for Yom Kippur. Pupils benefit from the design of the curriculum, which addresses this both from a pastoral viewpoint, but also from characteristically academic, historical and liturgical perspectives, for example, when pupils compare Abrahamic religions' beliefs regarding saints and angels.
- 3.21 Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including the need for exercise and of being mindful of their mental and emotional wellbeing. They are supported

in this by access to services such as a dedicated school counsellor. They described, for instance, how swimming helps to clear the mind after a hard day and their enjoyment of being able to participate in sports such as football, fencing and athletics. Pupils are well aware of the need to keep healthy and they know what constitutes a healthy diet. They are guided by staff to make healthy choices in their lunch choices and their snacks, although pupils explained that they had insufficient time available to eat their lunch on most days. Inspection evidence supports this view. Younger pupils benefit from a physical education (PE) lesson every day, due to the leadership's organisation of the school timetable. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. All pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that they knew what to do in the event of a fire alarm. They display a genuine enthusiasm for sport and described how much they enjoy inter-school sporting fixtures, such as football matches, although they expressed a wish for more frequent access to the outdoor recreation facilities adjacent to the school.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Kerry Lord	Reporting inspector
Mrs Susan La Farge	Compliance team inspector (head, ISA school)
Mr Giles Delaney	Team inspector (head, IAPS School)