



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**NORWICH SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Norwich School

The Lower School was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Norwich School</b>
DfE Number	<b>926/6124</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>311280</b>
Address	<b>Norwich School 70 The Close Norwich Norfolk NR1 4DD</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01603 728 430</b>
Fax Number	<b>01603 728 491</b>
Email Address	<b>hm@norwich-school.org.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr J B Hawkins</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr G H Copeman</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>820</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (582 boys; 238 girls)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>820</b>
Inspection dates	<b>12 Oct 2010 to 13 Oct 2010 08 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 2010</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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

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

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	4
(c) The contribution of teaching	5
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>6</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	6
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	7
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The quality of governance	8
(b) The quality of leadership and management	8
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	9
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>10</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Norwich School has its foundation in the Benedictine Priory established in the eleventh century. It is now a co-educational day-school with 820 pupils, seeking in the Christian tradition of the Church of England to foster love and compassion for one another. It aims, through a rich, varied and broad education, to produce scholarly and reflective young people who are committed to learning and at the same time equipped for leadership and service. The cathedral choristers continue to be educated at the school.
- 1.2 Since the time of the previous inspection in November 2004, the school has introduced co-education into each of its academic years and established new courses of the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). It has provided new science facilities, and followed this by a relocation of other teaching and study areas and extensive refurbishing. It has expanded significantly its provision of information and communication technology (ICT), and improved its languages and sports facilities and its library.
- 1.3 Admission to Year 7 is by the school's own examinations in English and in mathematics, and by assessment of a pupil's reasoning skills. Admission to Year 9 is usually by the Common Entrance examination of independent schools but, for those for whom this route is not available, the school sets again its own tests in English and mathematics and undertakes a reasoning assessment. Students join the sixth form on the basis of their achievement in GCSE examinations and by interview.
- 1.4 Standardised national assessment shows that the average ability of the pupils is well above the national average of pupils in all maintained schools and in line with the average in maintained selective schools. One pupil has a statement of special educational need (SEN) and is supported within the school. The school recognises a further 42 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD); these receive specialist guidance within the school but are not withdrawn from regular lessons. None receives support on account of English being an additional language to that normally spoken at home. One-hundred-and-one pupils receive fee support from the school.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Lower Four	Year 7
Upper Four	Year 8
Lower Five	Year 9
Middle Five	Year 10
Upper Five	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievement throughout the school is outstanding. They are eager learners, with a keen interest in study and a clear desire to succeed. They enjoy their lessons, develop skills quickly and they make good progress. Results in GCSE examinations are far above the national average achieved by pupils in all maintained schools and above the average of those in maintained selective schools. Progress and learning continue strongly in the sixth form, for both boys and girls, so that achievement at A level is again far above the average of pupils in all maintained schools, and well above the national average of pupils in maintained selective schools. In many lessons teaching is outstanding and exciting, with the pupils drawn on strongly by their teachers. In some lessons the quality of teaching falls below this high standard and sometimes too the marking of written work lacks precise explanation and specific direction to higher success. Support for all pupils with SEN or LDD is clear and effective.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is outstanding. They engage keenly in the full range of the school's activity, including work with and for the wider community, and in supporting each other. They participate enthusiastically in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and they are keen to promote the growth and success of their school. They have a real sense of engagement in it and they strongly endorse the school's achievement of full co-education. They relate very well to their teachers, to all members of the school community and to visitors. In their responses to the confidential pre-inspection questionnaire, some pupils felt that the school should listen more to their views and respond to them more effectively. Interviews and discussions with pupils indicate that this was confined to one issue, now resolved. Almost all pupils praised the school's relationships with them and felt wholly able to discuss matters of concern. They strongly appreciate the regular work of the school's consultative committee.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and that of leadership and management in the school are outstanding. Together, governors and leaders have met well the recommendations made at the time of the last inspection, including significant improvement of the library, implementing an effective programme of staff appraisal, and enhancing the responsible roles of heads of subject departments. They have also agreed and implemented clear and ambitious development plans. These have included expanding the number of pupils in the school, admitting girls to every year group, and developing learning facilities of the highest order, including ICT provision and new science facilities. They are also careful in discharging their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Governors and leaders review policies regularly and ensure their compliance with regulations. The views of parents, indicated by responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, are highly supportive across the full range of school activity. A small number of parents felt the school could do more for pupils with LDD and to involve parents more in its work. However, inspection evidence indicates that the school's provision and outreach are both sound and effective.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Further enhance the quality of teaching and of marking by the vigorous exchange of best practice.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' overall achievements throughout the school and of their learning, attitudes and skills is outstanding. It is also advanced upon the high standard recognised at the time of the previous inspection. The school fully meets its aim to produce scholarly, reflective young people who are capable of handling difficult concepts and of expressing profound thought. The pupils respond eagerly to this challenge and the levels of their success are outstanding.
- 3.2 The pupils reason perceptively and they think creatively. Pupils demonstrate logical and disciplined thought at a high level and apply knowledge from different subject areas to great effect. Their mathematical and scientific competence is high and they carry out scientific investigations skilfully and successfully. They are highly articulate and employ equally readily sophisticated vocabulary and subject-specific terms, whether in written work or during discussion. Skills in the use of ICT are well developed. They are used widely through all subjects and in each year. Sporting accomplishment, at both individual and team levels, is high and it is matched by excellence in the arts, academic competitions and debating. Achievement in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is high, and opportunity to travel abroad is frequent. Almost all pupils gain admission to their preferred university or institution of higher education.
- 3.3 Learning is outstanding, and progress is good at all levels. Success in public examinations is outstanding. The pupils' attainment at GCSE is far above the national average of pupils in all maintained schools and above that of those in maintained selective schools. Progress in the sixth form continues to be marked, with success at A level far above the national average of pupils in all maintained schools and above that of pupils in maintained selective schools. Attainment in music and in drama is outstanding.
- 3.4 Throughout the school, the pupils are keen to work and to succeed. They are well prepared for their lessons. They work very effectively as individuals, in pairs and in teams, and they demonstrate high levels of intellectual curiosity in all that they undertake.

#### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.5 The support given by the school's curricular and extra-curricular programmes to the pupils' learning and achievement is outstanding. The academic curriculum is broad and balanced, and it is challenging, thus meeting the aims of the school. It gives pupils of all abilities wide and demanding experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative fields. The curriculum includes three modern foreign languages and both Latin and ancient Greek. It offers politics, economics and critical thinking programmes, as well as philosophy. The *meno* and *demos* programmes, devised within the school, include all aspects of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), careers guidance, financial management, critical thinking and appropriate study skills. The library has been expanded and reorganised since the previous inspection to greater encourage pupils' research and learning. Pupils who are gifted or talented

are particularly encouraged by learning extension programmes and activities. Those who have LDD are carefully supported by appropriate guidance and regular monitoring.

- 3.6 The curriculum is successfully expanded by extensive programmes of extra-curricular activity, arranged and overseen by a member of the school's senior management. Sports include team games and personal pursuits, among them rowing, fencing and sailing. Pupils with physical difficulty or disability are supported to the highest levels, including international competition. Musical groups, ensembles, choirs and concerts encourage pupil confidence and competence. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and a strong commitment to Sea Scouts further enhance pupil activity and success. Academic visitors and also speakers from within the school encourage philosophical discussion among pupils within the Thomas Browne Society. Overseas visits and exchanges extend further both linguistic and cultural understanding.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.7 The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. In many lessons, and across the full range of subjects, it is outstanding. Here, learning is exciting because the pupils uncover it and recognise achievement as their own. The school is working actively to establish these highest standards in all lessons. Teachers throughout the school are committed and they are knowledgeable so that their teaching prompts and encourages learning successfully. Pupils consequently make rapid progress at all stages, including the sixth form, and the aims of the school to secure academic interest and excellence are met well.
- 3.8 Supported by careful and regular assessment, the teachers understand the needs of each pupil well. Those with SEN or LDD and those who are gifted and talented are clearly identified, so that they receive specific support and extension programmes. All teaching is well planned. It also greatly encourages intellectual enthusiasm and pursuit of the full and correct solution. Consequently learning and understanding are successful and achievement is high. Throughout the school, the pupils enjoy their lessons and their capacity to learn from each other is excellent.
- 3.9 Resources to support teaching are plentiful. Equipment for ICT is provided to a high standard. It is used well to support effective understanding and learning. Practical work in the sciences is to the highest levels. Marking is generally to a good standard. In the best practice, pupils are guided to find for themselves the most effective means to improve. In a few cases, simple indications of error provide only slight guidance for better performance.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school is successful in meeting its aims to encourage scholarship and reflection among its pupils and to equip them for lives of leadership and service. Through its provision of a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum, underpinned by a clear Christian ethos, it is highly successful in achieving these. The pupils succeed well so that they gain in self-confidence and in collective pride. They work together to excellent effect.
- 4.2 The pupils' growth in spiritual awareness is outstanding. The school's location within the cathedral close and its daily assemblies in the cathedral emphasise its spiritual heritage and elicit from the pupils a keen awareness of the Christian values of love and compassion. Pupils successfully involve themselves in the Christian Forum, prayer breakfasts, bible study and optional acts of worship. From Year 7 to Year 9 they study the range of major faiths and consider the transcendent as well as the worldly. They consult the Anglican chaplain readily for counsel. They enjoy the school's *meno* and *demos* programmes of PSHCE, delivered by enthusiastic and committed teachers. There, pupils explore successfully a wide range of ethical, spiritual and philosophical issues.
- 4.3 The moral development of the pupils is outstanding. They behave with great tolerance and openness to each other, show a friendly respect for staff and extend a warm welcome to visitors. Both the school's formal mentoring systems and the quality of its routine interactions produce a clearly strong culture of thoughtfulness and mutual support. Pupils are enthusiastic in promoting charitable causes through a pupil-led appeals committee. Causes range from a local breast cancer awareness campaign to support for disadvantaged children in Argentina.
- 4.4 The school provides ample opportunities for pupils to develop their aesthetic and artistic sensibilities and to expand their cultural horizons. Consequently, musical interest and performance are to the highest standards, and regular collective singing reinforces well the sense of community and spirituality. The pupils benefit from the visits of groups from abroad and from a wide programme of overseas language trips, sports tours and cultural visits. Thereby they widen their cultural horizons and expand their social concerns most effectively.
- 4.5 The pupils' personal and social development is outstanding. The house system is a strength of the school, regarded warmly by the pupils and underpinning the highly effective system of pastoral care. Girls have integrated well into the school. Senior pupils assume leadership roles and share co-operative planning for the needs of others. They contribute significantly to all school occasions and accept a degree of responsibility for their success. They are also vigilant to ensure best behaviour and to observe any instance of loneliness or bullying. They are trained carefully to act prudently and wisely. The school also operates a highly regarded and highly effective consultative committee, which initiates significant change and improvement.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.6 The school's arrangements to secure and promote the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils are outstanding, and in accordance with its aims. The school occupies an urban site where pupils are enabled to feel at home. They establish friendly relationships with each other, the staff and visitors. In establishing and securing this, housemasters and form tutors have crucial roles which they discharge extremely well. Chaplaincy arrangements are equally open and used very well. Careers education is outstanding, within the *demos* programme, and parents are regularly informed and involved in the pupils' decision-making.
- 4.7 Relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are outstanding. The all-age character of the house system encourages a continuity of care which serves pupils very well. Formal sessions are set aside for consultation and discussion with housemasters and tutors, but pupils also feel free and able to discuss matters with staff members they respect and feel comfortable with. Pupils believe that bullying is virtually non-existent, and they are confident in whom to approach if it should occur. Mentoring and peer support is open and well established, with training provided by a national agency. Trained counsellors are available and the medical centre is a place of assurance as well as a provider of appropriate care and referral. It is well equipped and constantly staffed. All medicines are securely stored and dispensed.
- 4.8 The school has comprehensive policies in place to ensure good behaviour, and secure provision to act swiftly and effectively if lapses should occur. Safeguarding policies and practice are exemplary and all staff receive regular and appropriate training. All registers are carefully taken and securely stored. Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding. Risk assessments are frequent and thorough. Comprehensive measures are in place to reduce the risks from fire and other hazards. The school has appropriate policies to increase access for all pupils with special educational needs or physical disabilities.
- 4.9 The school's catering provision is good, extended since the time of the last inspection, and healthy eating is strongly encouraged. Staff are appropriately trained to detect an eating disorder. All pupils engage in regular exercise and sport. They enjoy the carefully maintained grounds and facilities.
- 4.10 Pupils' responses to the confidential pre-inspection questionnaire showed very high degrees of satisfaction across all areas of school activity. Inspectors in their discussions with pupils were again assured of pupils' contentment and their sense of belonging and of importance within the school. Matters of concern could be readily discussed with teachers and school leaders, and resolved well. The school's consultative committee was seen as reliable, open, important and successful.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is outstanding. It is significantly improved since the last inspection. The governors are clear in their ambition for the school to be an academic leader, in learning and in scholarship. This they achieve very well. They have also met well the recommendation of the previous inspection to formulate a long-term development plan, and they have implemented this with outstanding success. They have carried out much important building and extensive improvement of fabric. They have also significantly refashioned the school to be a co-educational day school of the highest academic standards.
- 5.2 Financial planning is prudent; investment in staff and resources is generous and attractive accommodation is skilfully allocated on a central, urban site. The use of space is excellent. The governors have a clear insight into the working of the school and they provide well for its success. They arrange for the regular appraisal of the headmaster. They encourage innovation in the curriculum and high attainment. They also ensure comprehensive pastoral care and discharge carefully their responsibilities for child protection and for welfare, health and safety throughout the school. They review all policies regularly and appropriately. Consequently, the school is safe, happy, confident and successful.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management in the school is outstanding at all levels, and reflects the school's aims in a comprehensive manner. It is an outstanding feature of the school, clear in its ambition, united in its service and highly successful in its achievement. The school's leaders are consistent and vigorous in their pursuit of creating an open and academic environment for able pupils, where learning and scholarship are valued and sought after, and where Christian virtues of love and compassion encourage leadership and service. They work very well together to ensure success. They have met all recommendations made at the time of the previous inspection.
- 5.4 Educational direction is clear; it is also strong and ambitious. The school has embarked on new courses of study. It has widened the curriculum to provide appropriate challenge for each pupil. It has successfully introduced IGCSE courses and examinations and increased the roles of subject heads, to the benefit of all. The school appraises the teaching of each member each year. It allows mini-sabbaticals and reading days to encourage thorough and reflective teaching. The school exudes purpose and commitment, which have brought notable success and pleasure of learning. Policies are implemented with consistency, and matters of safeguarding receive proper attention.
- 5.5 The school bases its actions upon successful systems of self-evaluation and planning, together with careful implementation. As a result, teachers and support staff feel involved in the school and engaged in its success. They are highly motivated and encouraged to participate fully. The annual appraisal of teachers is well established and effective. The school takes considerable care when appointing staff, all of whom are trained appropriately for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. It scrupulously carries out all checks on the suitability of governors, staff and volunteers.

**5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.6 The quality of links between the school and parents, carers and guardians is outstanding. The school has established and secured a wide range of opportunities to communicate with parents, to meet and to discuss, whether electronically or in person. The consequent relationship is one of trust and confidence. The school's development plans, and progress with them, are discussed at regular meetings. Consultation over pupils' progress and their appropriate selection of subjects is timely and effective. Open days are regular and successful, and the school's location makes it easily accessible for informal visits.
- 5.7 In their responses to the confidential pre-inspection questionnaire, parents showed themselves very strongly in support of the school and its provision. Inspectors examined provision for pupils with SEN or LDD, and for those who are identified as gifted and talented, and found these to be of a high order. Similarly inspectors recognised significant opportunities for parents to become involved in supporting the work of the school, and promoting its success by their expertise. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and decision-making about future paths. The school deals well with the concerns of parents, carers and guardians so that formal processes, whilst available, are hardly ever employed.
- 5.8 The school has an informative website, which it regularly updates to keep parents informed. All required policies are available to parents and a series of electronic mail alerts advise parents, carers and guardians of forthcoming events.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, 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

Dr Anthony Dachs	Reporting Inspector
Dr Stephen Downes	Head, HMC school
Dr Dominic Lockett	Head, HMC school
Mrs Christine Mannion Watson	Former Head, GSA school
Mrs Joanne Williams	Senior Manager, GSA school
Mr Peter Williams	Former Principal, International School