



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

St George's School Edgbaston

September 2021

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Contents | 2 |
| School's Details | 3 |
| 1. Background Information | 4 |
| About the school | 4 |
| What the school seeks to do | 4 |
| About the pupils | 4 |
| 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection | 5 |
| Preface | 5 |
| Key findings | 6 |
| PART 1 – Quality of education provided | 6 |
| PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils | 6 |
| PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils | 6 |
| PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors | 6 |
| PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools | 7 |
| PART 6 – Provision of information | 7 |
| PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled | 7 |
| PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools | 7 |
| 3. Educational Quality Inspection | 8 |
| Preface | 8 |
| Recommendation | 8 |
| The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements | 8 |
| The quality of the pupils' personal development | 10 |
| 4. Inspection Evidence | 13 |

School's Details

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-----|---------------------|----|
| School | St George's School Edgbaston | | | |
| DfE number | 330/6000 | | | |
| Registered charity number | 1079647 | | | |
| Address | St George's School Edgbaston 31 Calthorpe Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 1RX | | | |
| Telephone number | 0121 625 0398 | | | |
| Email address | reception@sgse.co.uk | | | |
| Headmaster | Mr Gary Neal | | | |
| Chair of Trustees | Sir Robert Dowling | | | |
| Age range | 3 to 19 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 372 | | | |
| | EYFS | 6 | Lower School | 69 |
| | Upper School | 229 | Sixth Form | 68 |
| Inspection dates | 21 to 24 September 2021 | | | |

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St George's School Edgbaston is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 3 and 19 years. It was founded in 1999 from the merger of two schools, Edgbaston Church of England College for Girls and Edgbaston College. The upper school is housed in an original Georgian building with a connecting corridor to the lower school, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school is run by a charitable trust overseen by a board of trustees.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has extended its provision to include a pre-school class for children aged 3 to 4.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers and vulnerable children. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 returned in June 2020.
- 1.4 During this period of closure, the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.6 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.7 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home. Children of key workers and vulnerable pupils received their remote learning in school.
- 1.8 In the summer of 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded. However, in January 2020, November 2020 and January 2021 pupils accessed public examinations in GCSE Mathematics and English.
- 1.9 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.10 The school seeks to maximise individual achievement within a caring community, to develop respect and responsibility in relationships, to promote friendship, fair play and equality and to create opportunities for personal development in a changing and challenging world.

About the pupils

- 1.11 Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds and largely live in the Birmingham area. A few pupils come from a variety of countries overseas. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is broadly average with a significant number below average. The school has identified 85 pupils in the upper school and 22 in the lower school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include autism, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and speech, language and communication needs. In the upper school 50 pupils and in the lower school 4 pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 85 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), 13 of whom receive additional support for their English. The curriculum is adapted for the more able pupils, including those who have special talents in sport, music, art and computer science.

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 statutory framework. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

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 In the lower school, 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 At GCSE in the years 2018 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level and BTEC results in the years 2018 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the lower school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.13 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

2.14 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.

2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.16 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.18 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.20 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.

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

Key findings

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

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school.
- Pupils, including those who have SEND, make excellent progress from their starting points in the lower and upper school.
- Pupils work very well collaboratively and support each other's learning.
- Pupils' successes are underpinned by carefully targeted and highly individualised support from dedicated staff.

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

- Pupils of all ages show excellent self-knowledge and resilience sometimes in the face of considerable challenges.
- Pupils exhibit excellent social development and collaborative skills.
- Pupils' respect for and acceptance of diversity are hallmarks of the school.
- Pupils value the non-material aspects of life very highly and translate this into care for each other and a commitment to helping others.

Recommendation

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

- Strengthen all pupils' understanding of themselves and their relationships with others by developing the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme to make it more specific to this school and its pupils.

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 own measures of progress in the lower school show that most pupils achieve a rapid rate of progress in literacy and numeracy from their starting points and consistently perform above expectations. Almost all the very small numbers of children in the EYFS meet or exceed their early learning goals. In the upper school results at GCSE in the years 2018–19 were above the national average. Results continued to improve in 2020 and 2021 when centre-assessed grades were awarded. Results at A level, which were below the national average in 2018–19, showing marked improvement

in 2020 and 2021, especially in the number of A* to C grades awarded. Of the pupils who took BTEC examinations in 2021 two thirds achieved starred distinctions or distinctions. Analysis of these results shows that pupils, including those with SEND, are performing above or well above their expectations. This is because the school creates individualised study programmes for each pupil, including targeted careers advice, so that they are well equipped for their transition to university, paid employment, or apprenticeships. Many pupils proceed to highly competitive courses and universities, and sixth form pupils say that they are now aiming for university courses which they would have not considered previously as their confidence and academic performance have improved.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding and they apply them effectively across the curriculum. The youngest children in the EYFS showed that they could understand the structure of a story and the characters within it whilst exploring *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Older lower school pupils showed excellent understanding of the concept of ecosystems when investigating different natural regions. Upper school pupils develop their practical and creative skills in challenging activities such as touch typing, becoming an 'overblown' character in drama, executing lino prints in art and chopping vegetables in food technology. Highly developed skills are also evident in displayed ceramic sculptures of different organic forms and in innovative photography projects on themes such as fairy tales. Pupils of all ages and abilities build on previous knowledge and skills so that they can progress to the next level in their learning. More able GCSE pupils develop their skills by moving on to further mathematics and more challenging English texts after taking GCSE in maths and English language a year early. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all pupils said that their skills and knowledge improved in most of their lessons.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages display highly positive attitudes to their learning across a wide range of subjects. They are interested in their lessons, co-operate enthusiastically with each other, and readily seek help when they need it. SEND pupils, including those with an education and health care (EHC) plan, make rapid progress from their starting points. This is because the school's governance and leadership is committed to making strong efforts to understand the nature of their needs and to put in place effective and individualised support. Pupils say that the support transforms their personal as well as their academic improvement as the school recognises that the two are inextricably linked. They are highly aspirational and persevere effectively towards their long-term goals because skilled teaching encourages them, reduces their fear of failure, and raises their expectations. Older pupils assist younger ones in their learning and pupils within a peer group willingly assist each other, as in the scheme in the lower school where native speakers in a given language teach their peers how to speak it over a month. These excellent attitudes to learning demonstrate fulfilment of the school's aim to maximise individual achievement within a caring community.
- 3.8 Pupils, including those with SEND, develop their communication skills rapidly. This is because the school provides a wide range of different types of effective individual and group support. Pupils speak confidently to each other in discussion and in public during assemblies, as when giving speeches for election as house captains. They enjoy debating and have achieved success in this area. Lower and upper school pupils expressed their views in a mature and articulate way, including whilst speaking to inspectors. Their ability to listen to each other is highly developed by successful teaching, so that all pupils can contribute effectively to verbal discussions. In the lower school writing is recognised as an area for development and pupils are improving these skills rapidly, as seen in literacy lessons where pupils concentrated effectively on creating more complex sentences and developing a story.
- 3.9 Pupils' numeracy skills in relation to their starting points are strong. Older lower school pupils showed secure understanding of place value and could order very large numbers with confidence. Upper school pupils apply their mathematical skills with precision and confidence, such as when analysing costs for a coastal erosion project in geography or solving density calculations in physics. By the sixth form they are confident in using high level mathematical skills across their subjects, they enjoy problem solving and pushing themselves in their understanding, working effectively individually and in groups. Able mathematicians grasp opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills with

enthusiasm. Pupils are comfortable in a digital world and make appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) for presenting their work and supporting their learning in a wide range of subjects. They further developed their competency during recent periods of remote learning having been effectively trained in the use of video conferencing. The most digitally able and enthusiastic pupils have achieved notable success year-on-year in the national Cyber Centurion Competition, being overall winners twice recently in different age groups. Pupils spoke of the increasing digital confidence the Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award programme has given them.

- 3.10 Pupils achieve success in many individual and group activities. Whilst opportunities for competitive sport beyond school have been limited during the pandemic, pupils have a strong record of previous success in a wide variety of sports, appropriately chosen for a relatively small school. These include regional and national achievements in table tennis, inclusive football and basketball. The school has a School Games Gold Award for its efforts to encourage as many pupils as possible to participate and compete in school sport. Pupils' individual achievements are celebrated and used as exemplars to encourage younger pupils. These include notable successes in art, music and motorsport as well as more traditional sports. Pupils of all abilities participate in a wide programme of enrichment activities which have recently re-started as restrictions relating to the pandemic have been eased. They speak of enjoying opportunities to sing in the choir and perform, play volleyball, take part in debating, play football or work to improve their computer skills. Many pupils who enter the school with complex needs which impact both their physical and mental health, achieve success by being able to participate with confidence in a wide range of activities, some of them involving public performance.
- 3.11 The successes of the pupils are a result of their excellent study skills, developed over their time at school. Many pupils overcome specific difficulties as they learn and apply a range of study and organisational skills promoted through specialist and often, individual, teaching and mentoring. Pupils are highly aspirational and prepared to work out different strategies to help themselves progress, including an upper school pupil-led initiative to support each other academically before school each day. They draw on a wide range of resources and the most able can synthesise across subjects and analyse with confidence.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils develop excellent self-knowledge and resilience as they move through the school, sometimes in the face of considerable challenges. Many describe the support they receive as transformational in improving their self-confidence and self-esteem as they have responded to an individualised approach to learning and sensitive pastoral care. Pupils build supportive relationships with each other, collaborating productively in lessons and working purposefully together towards shared aims when involved in clubs and activities. Strong relationships are forged within and across year groups and older pupils, who have worked hard to overcome difficulties themselves, willingly support younger ones with similar needs. The school's enrichment programme, strongly supported by trustees and senior leaders, plays a key role in promoting the social development of pupils, who work together on projects such as sporting activities, crafts, performing arts and cookery. Many of these activities are enthusiastically led by pupils, who are embracing them with renewed energy and commitment since their return to school.
- 3.14 Pupils not only tolerate but value difference because they appreciate the wide range of personalities, needs and backgrounds within the school's population. Pupils accept their own and each other's strengths and weaknesses and are open about them, creating a strong and caring community. This fulfils the school's stated aim to develop respect and responsibility in all relationships. Most pupils say that exploring themes in the PHSE programme, as well as in their academic lessons and in their form time, helps them to understand themselves and each other better. Older lower school pupils enthusiastically suggested ingredients for a 'friendship' recipe and talked confidently about equality

law and what it meant for them. In the upper school many pupils value opportunities to discuss current issues such as those relating to misogyny and racial injustice, developing well thought out arguments in discussion and challenging stereotypes and generalisations. However, a few female pupils expressed the view that they did not feel there were enough opportunities for open discussion of the issues which may affect them.

- 3.15 Pupils express pride in the school's status as a UNICEF Rights-Respecting School (Silver Award). They identify strongly with its stated principles and are working to the gold award with determination. Lower school pupils describe the ways in which they are unique and respectful and place their contributions on a large 'tree of tolerance'; they discuss the importance of understanding the rights of children across the world with detailed reference to the 'Rights of the Child' and global goals. Pupils are developing values for life in these sessions because effective teaching encourages them to think deeply about themselves and others. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that the school promotes tolerance and respect for others, including those with protected characteristics.
- 3.16 Pupils across the school are adept at making decisions and they are encouraged to do so from an early age. In the EYFS the youngest children choose their own activities which are then used as the basis for developing language or number skills. Lower school pupils confidently make decisions to work hard and understand that improving step-by-step is the key. Upper school pupils show acute understanding of the responsibility they have to make good decisions about their future. They make careful and appropriate choices for GCSE and sixth form and seek advice readily from staff who know them well and want to ensure that their subject and qualification choices give them the best chance of success.
- 3.17 Pupils express a strong moral understanding and clearly distinguish between right and wrong; they appreciate, and practise, positive actions and behaviours such as supporting their peers. EYFS children understand the need to say sorry for actions with poor consequences and lower school pupils demonstrate through their behaviour an appreciation of the needs and situations of others. Upper school pupils are aware of the potential impact of different forms of harassment and abuse. They can recognise what these might look like and articulate the personal steps they would take to prevent this harmful behaviour. Pupils are mature and altruistic young people who describe their wishes as those to do with family, happiness and helping others, rather than the acquisition of material possessions.
- 3.18 Pupils value the opportunities provided to express their views on a wide variety of issues. They stand for election to the school council willingly, deliver speeches to their peers to put forward their case and are very positive about its ability to effect change. Recent initiatives and changes achieved include uniform change and sending off old uniforms to a school in Kenya, changing the house names and the school lunch menus. Pupils say that these experiences give them an understanding of how democracy works and the importance of being a good active citizen. Older lower school pupils have produced thoughtful work on changes in crime and punishment over time and were able to highlight reasons why they liked living in this country and the role played by public services. Although links with the local community have been difficult during the pandemic pupils have maintained them by writing to residents of a local care home which they have previously visited and by carrying out a march through the local area to raise funds for a local charity. Pupils organise charity events for wider charities selected by them in their houses and regard this as an active part of enacting the values concomitant with the school's status as a rights-respecting school.
- 3.19 Pupils strongly appreciate the non-material aspects of life, expressing this through their excellent art, photography and music, whether by singing together in the choir or creating thought-provoking photographic projects and pieces of art. They value the very varied faiths practised in the school community and enjoy exploring the ideas and beliefs of their peers informally as well as in their religious studies curriculum.
- 3.20 Pupils say that they learn how to stay physically and mentally healthy because the curriculum offers them many opportunities to exercise regularly, they can learn about the importance of a good diet in

their food technology lessons and they are encouraged to talk to each other and to staff if they have problems. A very large majority of pupils in the questionnaires said that they feel safe at school. They value the individual nature of much of the support given by mentors and learning support assistants which aids their personal development. Access to quiet areas in the lower and upper school is appreciated by pupils as is the provision for mindfulness and the strategies they are given for protective behaviours. Pupils of all ages say that they are well educated about the challenges of online safety and that they appreciate the school's policy of no mobile phones until the sixth form.

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 the chair 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 facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Mrs Kate McCarey | Reporting inspector |
| Mr Michael Brewer | Team inspector (Head, SofH school) |
| Mrs Ann-Marie Elding | Team inspector (Head, SofH school) |
| Miss Jacqueline Zugg | Team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school) |