

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Ruckleigh School

May 2019



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School's Details

Ruckleigh			
334/6007			
Solihull			
0121 705 277	3		
office@ruckleigh.co.uk			
Mr Dominic Smith			
Mrs Charlotte Laurens			
3 to 11			
251			
Boys	149	Girls	102
EYFS	53	Lower (Years 1 to 2)	66
Middle (Years 3 to 4)	70	Upper (Years 5 to 6)	62
8 to 10 May 2019			
	334/6007 17, Lode Lane Solihull West Midland B91 2AB 0121 705 277 office@ruckled Mr Dominic S Mrs Charlotted 3 to 11 251 Boys EYFS Middle (Years 3 to 4)	334/6007 17, Lode Lane Solihull West Midlands B91 2AB 0121 705 2773 office@ruckleigh.co.uk Mr Dominic Smith Mrs Charlotte Laurens 3 to 11 251 Boys 149 EYFS 53 Middle 70 (Years 3 to 4)	334/6007 17, Lode Lane Solihull West Midlands B91 2AB 0121 705 2773 office@ruckleigh.co.uk Mr Dominic Smith Mrs Charlotte Laurens 3 to 11 251 Boys 149 Girls EYFS 53 Lower (Years 1 to 2) Middle (Years 3 to 4) 70 Upper (Years 5 to 6)

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Ruckleigh school is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged from 3 to 11 years. It is based in the town centre of Solihull. Ruckleigh School was founded in 1909 and is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. Ruckleigh was acquired by the Carr-Smith family in 1948. The school is a limited company and the family are responsible for the governance of the school. The school has access to its own playing fields and has all weather surface tennis courts. The headmaster was appointed in September 2018.

1.2 Since the previous inspection, computing facilities have been updated and the Early Years (EYFS) area refurbished.

What the school seeks to do

1.3 The school aims to provide a caring and safe learning environment in which children can reach their full potential and be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Of equal importance to the school is its aim to create happy, well-rounded pupils able to adapt and thrive in the ever-changing world.

About the pupils

1.4 The pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, and are representative of the wide ranging cultural diversity within the local area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils ranges from average to above average. The school has identified 13 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which includes dyslexia and a range of other learning difficulties, all of whom require additional specialist help. No pupils have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 36 pupils, although only a small number receive additional support. Data used by the school have identified 34 pupils as being the most able and having particular talents in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them because of their special talents academically but also in art, drama, music and sport.

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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> Regulations 2014, <u>Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework</u>.

Key findings

2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 - Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school, 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 pupils 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.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils throughout the school make excellent progress over time, and levels of achievement are high.
 - Pupils express themselves confidently and articulately.
 - Pupils' attitude to all they undertake is mature and positive.
 - From the early years onwards, pupils are happy, energetic and enthusiastic learners.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils successfully live up to the school's stated aims and are learning to adapt and thrive in the ever-changing world.
 - Pupils throughout the school show excellent confidence and self-awareness.
 - The pupils display a genuine concern and respect for others, in this inclusive and caring community.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school is advised to make the following improvements:
 - Enhance the professional development of staff to enrich and sustain the achievements of all pupils in information and communication technology.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school fully meets its aim to encourage and challenge pupils to fulfil their potential. Within an atmosphere of support and calm, pupils strive to achieve their very best. Throughout the school, pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning, towards each other, and towards their teachers. They share views and ideas most effectively and collaborative learning is second nature, as seen in the way they work as a team to achieve the best innings in cricket. Pupils are mature and independent learners and are keen to take initiative in their learning.
- 3.6 The excellent standard of achievement is supported most effectively by the newly formed leadership team. Pupils' high standards of achievement are the result of robust systems and structures and the closer monitoring and staff development which has been introduced. The concept of the new Advisory Board adds an additional layer of support to the already strong governance. Evaluation within the EYFS setting has been given particular priority, which meets a recommendation from the previous inspection. Opportunities for these children to experience a richer curriculum, and for parental involvement, have been greatly enhanced by their new purpose-built accommodation.
- 3.7 The school does not enter pupils for National Curriculum tests. Consequently, the pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to age-related expectations. Inspection evidence from observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils supports this judgement. Throughout the school and in all subjects, academic attainment was found to be in advance of that expected at the relevant levels of age and stage of development. Furthermore, most of those leaving from Year 6, gain places to senior schools with demanding entrance requirements, with some being awarded entrance scholarships. Pupils make good and frequently excellent progress both in relation to their starting points and in comparison with pupils of similar ability. The scrutiny of pupils' written work showed marked progress and improvement over time. Less able pupils, and those with SEND or

EAL, make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported both in class and also when receiving specialist help. More able pupils and those with particular talents are challenged in lessons through enrichment and extension tasks, so enabling them to achieve higher-order learning skills. Pupils interviewed said they appreciate the help teachers provide outside of lessons, and the small number of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire all agreed that they are given the opportunity to learn and make progress. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire also agreed that teaching enables their children to make good progress and to develop skills for the future.

- 3.8 Pupils develop high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of their learning, including the EYFS. This acquisition is particularly strong in literacy and mathematics. Teaching, which is both skilful and knowledgeable, in almost all lessons, makes a highly significant contribution to pupils' strong achievement. The use of specialist subject teachers as demonstrated in science, music, computing, drama and French, adds an additional dimension to the strong picture of progress. The programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is wide ranging and carefully graduated to be appropriate to each age group. Year 2 pupils describe the work of Malala, the Nobel Peace prize winner, and how she is working for peace and girls' education. Both these initiatives, address the previous report's recommendations with regard to further developing the science and PSHE curriculum. Pupils are able to extend their ideas and offer their views and questions through the many opportunities provided. In humanities, all pupils, including even the youngest, demonstrate detailed knowledge of environmental issues affecting our world. EYFS children know that plastic can pollute the seas, and carry out investigations in their water play. Older pupils hold mature discussions about emissions of fuel polluting the environment and they discuss ways in which they can affect climate change. The Eco Committee ensures that these values permeate throughout the school.
- 3.9 Pupils are highly skilled in literacy in discussions with both their peers and adults They are notably articulate and apply their speaking skills confidently when performing to an audience. Even the youngest pupils gain distinctions in the drama accreditation tests and the range and wealth of poetry recited by heart is a joy to hear. As pupils move through the school, they read and write with increasing fluency and in a range of contexts. A story writing workshop in Year 3, used brainstorming discussions considering modern texts, to inspire the pupils to write creatively and independently and to use a 'hook' in the opening paragraph to capture the reader's attention.
- 3.10 Throughout the school, pupils achieve high standards in mathematics. They manipulate numbers successfully both in algebraic equations and geometry. Eight Year 6 pupils reached a top level in a National Maths competition. Older pupils confidently apply logic and mathematical understanding to a range of subjects. In science, pupils correctly analyse data and use graphs to record their results, such as when they investigate the separation of materials which is then linked to the everyday problem of treating sewage.
- 3.11 Pupils' confidence and knowledge of computing is supported by the recent addition of technological hard and software. Younger pupils learn basic coding to create games and this acumen is extended as they move through the school. Older pupils can make presentations and use tablets successfully for photography and for independently publishing the school's newsletter. Within the EYFS, there is excitement and enthusiasm as the children search for the 'Ginger Bread Men' using technology confidently and safely as an integral part of their learning and development. Pupils' enrichment and effective use of ICT flourishes when staff feel confident in the use of technology and the extensive applications and programs available to support learning.
- 3.12 Children in the EYFS demonstrate excellent independent learning skills through the continuous provision, both inside and outdoors, of stimulating activities promoting all areas of development. Pupils throughout the school approach investigative challenges enthusiastically and they are confident to use a wide range of resources. Younger pupils choose reference books confidently and learn facts to share with their peers, so building up a bank of useful knowledge. In geography, Year 5 created a 'Guide to Scotland' and its links to winter sport, sharing their findings expertly with their peers. Older

- pupils develop good analytical techniques in music where they are tasked to determine the pitch of instruments and recognise and read music notation. Pupils respond positively to the well-stocked library, a bright and cheerful room which is most conducive to reading and studying.
- 3.13 Sports' teams achieve considerable success in football, netball and cricket. Individual pupils achieve outstanding success in drama and athletics. Most pupils play at least one musical instrument, as music offers considerable opportunities for pupils to achieve creatively and within the performing arts. The choir and many various ensembles provide musical opportunities for pupils of all ages to develop and enhance their skills. Pupils regularly perform in high quality productions staged by the school at a local theatre.
- 3.14 In the questionnaire, a small minority of parents felt that the range of extra-curricular activities was limited. Inspection evidence, including further discussions with parents, shows that there is a good range of activities available for pupils of all ages. Popular clubs involve archery, tennis and golf and most recently, a Ruckleigh pupil won the local golf club Junior and Captain's Trophy.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.16 As they move through the school, pupils mature and develop emotionally as a result of being a member of this close-knit community which is united by common characteristics and values of respect and tolerance. The school is a lively, purposeful place, where the pupils learn to live up to the school's stated aims of adapting and thriving in the modern world.
- 3.17 Pupils co-exist harmoniously and they relish the cultural diversity in this inclusive caring school, where there are pupils from many different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. The beautiful stained glass window designed by the pupils themselves represents these religious and cultural differences. They invite each other to share an understanding of their personal beliefs and traditions and so increase their knowledge of difference. The school leadership's recognition of different religions' festivals enhances pupils' enjoyment and comprehension. The vast majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire and who were spoken to during the inspection visit, acknowledged that the school encourages them to respect other people. All the parents and staff who responded agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 3.18 Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and benefit from the many opportunities for leadership and service. The school successfully meets its aim to ensure that pupils contribute to the wider community through charitable engagement and a respect for the environment. Pupils choose their charitable projects by vote, after a process of research by the pupils themselves. As a result they undertake activities such as baking cakes which they sell on 'Fun Fridays', and selling 'slime' to support a Downs' Syndrome charity. These ventures awaken pupils to issues in the wider world and develop their understanding and compassion for people much less fortunate than themselves. Pupils come to understand that decisions they make are important determinants of their own and others' well-being.
- 3.19 Pupils successfully learn to co-operate and to work effectively as team members. In class, on the games field, in clubs and around the school generally, they demonstrate thoughtfulness and respect in the high quality of their collaboration. For example, they share ideas about their work together and understand that they can learn from their mistakes. While they have their own personal aspirations, pupils generously celebrate the successes of their peers. The school is welcoming to newcomers. When a pupil with EAL enters the school, he or she is well supported by being paired where possible with a pupil who has the same mother tongue. From an early age, pupils recognise the importance of fair play and obeying rules, and they develop a strong moral sense of right and wrong. They develop a strong sense of sportsmanship through supporting and working hard for their house teams. They come to understand and respect the system of laws, and this is reinforced by themes in assemblies

and PSHE, as well as representations from visitors. Pupils regard the school's application of rewards and sanctions as fair; they understand the graduation of sanctions which supports their excellent conduct and behaviour. They emphatically say: 'Start Telling other people'. All parents, pupils and staff who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school deals well with any bullying issues. In interviews pupils speak warmly of a happy and friendly community in which they show genuine concern for one another.

- 3.20 Pupils conduct themselves sensibly and courteously around the school and their classroom behaviour is exemplary, affording them every opportunity for productive study. Pupils are personable and self-assured in the company of adults, and excellent ambassadors for the school. The vast majority of parents and staff agree that the school actively promotes good behaviour, and inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.21 The pupils' growth in confidence and self-worth is successfully nurtured by the school. Pupils gain confidence from the strong rapport, which they enjoy with their teachers, who set a considerate, good-humoured example to their charges. Mindfulness and yoga have been introduced to the school's programme, and it was noted during the inspection that pupils develop a mature capacity to use the vocabulary of reflection; they are able to articulate thoughtfully how they feel about themselves. Pupils in a Year 3 drama lesson, for example, understood that role play gives them confidence and helps them to get on with each other whilst older pupils provide compassion and support for their peers who may at times need help. Pupils' self -esteem is promoted by formal school systems, ranging from EYFS 'star of the week' to the appointment of two senior pupils as head boy and head girl.
- 3.22 Encouraged and supported by teachers and coaches, pupils develop resilience and perseverance. Their determination was observed in games' lessons and in pupils' responses to academic challenges, such as solving difficult problems in mathematics. Younger pupils benefit from a 'Learning Tree' which develops the pupils' independence and enables them to take charge of their learning by thinking which animal they identify with to move learning forward 'I am a fox today taking pride in my work and will do my best'. Pupils gain spiritual enrichment, reflecting on the beauty of nature, or discussing the complexities of 'Why God is important to some people?' Their confidence and self- esteem is built up from a wealth of sources such as the creative and performing arts, guest speakers and a wide variety of visits and outings, which the pupils often organise independently.
- 3.23 Pupils feel safe at the school and they know what to do if they need help or advice, or if one of their fellows is in difficulty or distress. Pupils acquire a clear understanding of safe practices, whether working on science investigations, little ones negotiating steep staircases, or encountering the hazards of the weather. All of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that they understand how to keep safe on-line. In interviews, pupils confirmed that they have been regularly educated in esafety. The pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and they benefit from the opportunities to take exercise, in physical education lessons and games sessions as well as recreationally. Pupils understand about the need for a healthy, balanced diet and enjoy the salad and fresh fruit always on the menu.
- 3.24 The overwhelming majority of both parents and staff who responded to the questionnaire saw the school as being well governed, led and managed, with the premises well maintained. The excellent outcomes throughout the school reflect the high priority placed by governance and leadership on the personal development of all pupils and the family ethos and values consistently promoted. When they leave, pupils are extremely well prepared for the responsibilities, opportunities and experiences of the next chapter of their lives.

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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 managing director, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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 Sandra Teacher Reporting inspector

Mrs H. Ruth Loveman Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Ms Samantha Sawyer Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)