



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Nottingham High School

October 2019



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School's Details

School	Nottingham High School		
DfE number	892/6004		
Registered charity number	1104251		
Address	Nottingham High School Waverley Mount Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG7 4ED		
Telephone number	0115 978 6056		
Email address	info@nottinghamhigh.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Kevin Fear		
Chair of governors	Mr David Wild		
Age range	11 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	789		
	Seniors	558	Sixth Form 231
Inspection dates	8 to 10 October 2019		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Nottingham High School is a day school for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. Founded in 1513 to educate male pupils, the school became co-educational in 2015 when female pupils were admitted for the first time. The school is a registered charity and a limited company by guarantee, sharing a board of governors with Nottingham High Infant and Junior School.
- 1.2 The school comprises two sections: senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years, and sixth form, for pupils aged 16 to 18 years.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new assistant head for teaching and learning and integrated female pupils into all years of the school.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to ensure that each pupil builds intellectual curiosity, independence, confidence and emotional resilience, striving for the highest personal standards through challenge and opportunity.

About the pupils

- 1.5 The pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, with a majority from white British families alongside a number from other ethnic groups. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 92 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 44 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 61 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The school modifies the curriculum for pupils identified as being the most able in the school's population, and for other pupils because of their special talent in sport and music.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

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

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

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

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2016 to 2018, performance has been well above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2016 to 2018 have been well above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 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.

2.19 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'.

Key findings

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

- Pupils demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning: they respond to academic challenge with purpose and commitment.
- Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent communication skills. They listen carefully and articulate challenging concepts with confidence.
- Pupils demonstrate strong numeracy skills across the school.
- Pupils exhibit excellent information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- Pupils achieve highly in a wide range of academic and other areas, such as sports, music and outdoor pursuits.

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

- Pupils display outstanding social skills, actively participating within their school community and demonstrating commitment to social outreach.
- Pupils have high levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience.
- Pupils' moral understanding is well developed. They demonstrate a keen sense of judgement and understand how their decisions affect those around them and their own futures.
- Pupils show respect and tolerance for each other, actively working together to promote a harmonious community.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They consciously make choices that promote their well-being.

Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school may wish to consider strengthening the careers provision across the school to increase pupils' awareness of career opportunities.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils approach their learning with a genuine sense of openness and intellectual excitement. They respond positively to the school's ethos of academic challenge, working with focus and commitment. As independent learners, pupils make rapid progress as demonstrated by senior pupils who bring a freshness of approach and considerable breadth of research to a wide range of extended essay projects. Pupils routinely support each other in collaborative tasks, for example, encouraging each other with good humour as they conjugate verbs in a Spanish GCSE class, or striving together to solve demanding index problems in mathematics lessons. In the *1513 Society* which offers additional opportunities for academic challenge, pupils work avidly, carrying out research projects independently and together, which extend their learning well beyond the curriculum. Pupils of all ages understand the importance of taking responsibility for their learning and enthusiastically rise to the challenges set for them, keen to achieve high personal standards. Across the school, pupils employ strategies from the meta-learning initiative, a programme designed to develop new learning skills, recently introduced by school leaders and supported by governors, demonstrating an appreciation of the process of learning and developing an understanding of how this can improve their own performance. Pupils of all abilities apply themselves with diligence to their lessons and make rapid progress, supported in doing so by the use of high-quality resources and excellent teaching.
- 3.6 Pupils have well developed communication skills. They are confident, articulate speakers, fluently using technical vocabulary and clear modes of expression to explain complex concepts. For example, this was seen when younger pupils competently discussed the ecological impact of deforestation. They listen attentively to one another and to their teachers, sharing ideas with courtesy and respect. Pupils intently but calmly discussed the creation story in a Religious Studies (RS) lesson, demonstrating an understanding of how personal beliefs are important and may vary. They are adept at assessing their own and each other's work in a positive and helpful manner, and in doing so, develop their own learning and that of others. They consistently use their evaluative skills to encourage each other in their performance, as demonstrated in a sports lesson where partners helped each other to tackle the new challenge of hurdling. Pupils write with fluency and maturity of style and read with attention to detail, such as when decoding an unseen Latin translation using technical and advanced grammatical expression.
- 3.7 Pupils confidently apply their strong mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum and show an awareness of the importance of applying their numerical skills in a wide range of contexts. A-level economics pupils confidently discussed using a particular form of graph to illustrate current account deficit within the broader topic of supply and demand. Data gathered from a recent visit to London's Docklands were used effectively by older pupils in a geography lesson to create graphs showing the relative development of various locations within the area. Younger pupils were passionate about using their mathematical skills in food and nutrition, describing how they have to weigh ingredients, adjust ratios in recipes and determine nutritional content using percentages. In a mathematics lesson, older pupils delighted in tackling problems involving combinations and permutations, displaying high levels of skill and technical ability. Pupils of all ages are highly effective at numerical calculation, consistently applying their mathematical knowledge in all situations, from calculating weight and stress in robotics to solving algebraic questions.
- 3.8 Throughout the school, pupils make judicious use of their ICT skills to support and further their learning, effectively employing a wide range of digital platforms. ICT is thoroughly embedded in all subjects, both in the classroom and at home, with a well-resourced culture of using ICT to extend learning and create attractive, fact-filled presentations. Pupils of all ages understand the need to carefully evaluate information available on the internet. They use technology responsibly and effectively as when older pupils made ready and proficient use of ICT in their drama studies to record performances for reflection and peer review. Younger pupils used their own devices to create mind maps in a religious studies lesson, while senior pupils competently recorded data from a practical

session in biology. In a design and technology (DT) lesson, pupils confidently used the internet to research a range of motion sensors.

- 3.9 Pupils of all abilities achieve highly across a range of subjects. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2016 to 2018. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE and at A-level have been well above in relation to the national average for maintained schools. Results at GCSE indicate a strong upward trend particularly in the higher ability range. In their A-level examinations, almost two thirds of the candidates achieve A* and A grades. Pupils with SEND and EAL make similar progress to other pupils over time with many exceeding expected target grades. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in improved performance in all year groups and fully meets a previous recommendation. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents and very large majority of pupils agreed that teaching enables pupils to make progress. In discussions, pupils unanimously expressed their appreciation of the support they receive from their teachers.
- 3.10 Pupils' academic and other achievements are excellent. Pupils have gained notable successes in mathematics and science Olympiads and achieved national awards in Young Engineer for Britain competitions. Teams have successfully represented the school as world finalists in the USA VEX Robotics competitions and competed at national level in the Schools' Challenge Quiz, reaching the semi-finals. Chess is a strong feature of the extra-curricular programme with team success at national level and individual success in the world championships. Sports teams consistently achieve success in regional and local competitions with a number of pupils selected to represent the county in cross-country running. Encouraged by the strong sporting ethos of the school, pupils achieve notable success in BMX racing, ice-skating, athletics, equestrian events and shooting competitions. Additionally, pupils develop a wide range of interests and skills outside the classroom through the extensive provision of clubs and activities offered by the school. There is a flourishing scouts population in the school and, from Year 9, many pupils participate in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF). Significant numbers of pupils achieve bronze, silver and gold awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils hone their musical talents through participation in choirs, orchestras, bands and musical ensembles, the school's big band and piano quartet gaining success in national competitions. They develop an understanding of all aspects of theatre through the many school productions put on throughout the year and participate with enthusiasm in the house competitions, many of which are led by older pupils. Younger pupils develop a range of skills and experiences through working towards the High School Award.
- 3.11 Pupils are ardent in their acquisition of knowledge and display excellent study skills. The curriculum offers a broad range of challenge and opportunity, and the vast majority of parents and most pupils are satisfied with the number and variety of subjects offered. As a result of the curriculum offered, pupils confidently use higher-order thinking skills, analysing, synthesising and evaluating arguments to support their understanding. Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent levels of conceptual skill and understanding as was seen in a psychology lesson when senior pupils competently distinguished between the strengths and weaknesses of an explanation of schizophrenia, and in an English lesson, when younger pupils used evidence from the text to hypothesise ideas to build an argument. Pupils of all ages enjoy opportunities for debate, competently analysing argument proposals and responding with flair and passion.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils flourish as part of a community which actively nurtures them and shapes their well-rounded development. Supported by strong leadership and the provision of excellent resources, pupils develop self-confidence, emotional resilience and independence, fulfilling the school's ambitious aims. The atmosphere within the school is calm and purposeful with pupils throughout the school exhibiting mature social skills, quiet acceptance of each other and strong personal development. The sixth form leadership team works closely with senior managers to assist in the day-to-day matters of the school, bringing the interests of the pupils to the fore. A recent enterprise has highlighted environmental issues resulting in a whole school response to current issues with pupils working to ensure an eco friendly school. Elected representatives from each class take an active role in the school council, proposing ideas and reporting on decisions. Pupils gain further insight into leadership skills as they captain sports teams and organise and lead house events. Pupils make friends across the year groups, supported by the strong vertical pastoral system. This results in a mutually supportive community where younger pupils confidently approach older pupils for help and guidance. Pupils develop a strong sense of duty and service to the wider community through their involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, the CCF and the scouts. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and are vigorous in their support for the Community Action programme which, for example, organises collections for a local food bank. Many volunteer to help in charity fund raising. School choirs and musicians perform within the local area with the Big Band regularly visiting nearby primary schools to help develop an appreciation of music in younger children.
- 3.14 Pupils are self-aware and confident. Through the effective framework of the self-review and target booklets, pupils develop a reflective approach towards their life in school. They successfully manage their commitments and gain a resilience and determination to succeed in their endeavours, demonstrating the school's success in meeting its aims. They know how to improve their academic performance, are proud of their work and are eager to promote their learning. Within the classroom, pupils approach challenging work with perseverance, encouraged by the ethos that making mistakes helps one learn. Younger pupils in art, for example, made their own scorpions out of chicken wire, having to surmount the challenge without instructions from their teacher. Senior pupils persisted in their analysis of two demanding texts in an English lesson, in order to draw convincing comparisons. Outside the classroom, pupils build self-confidence and develop teamwork skills through their experiences in a variety of situations provided by the school's extensive trips and visits programme; for example, Year 9 pupils spoke enthusiastically of the challenges they faced on their Outdoor Education Trip to Llanberris Pass, and explained how they worked together to overcome these. Almost all parents feel that the school helps their children to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Sixth form pupils feel very well prepared for the next step in their careers and were highly appreciative of the guidance provided by the school, however this provision is not as evident for younger pupils who would value a higher level of information about career options.
- 3.15 Pupils of all ages demonstrate a clear understanding of the behaviour expected of them and reflect sensibly on the need for rules in order to maintain cohesion within their community. The overwhelming majority of parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school expects them to behave well. Pupils are confident in their understanding of the need to take responsibility for their own actions, realising that their own behaviour can affect those around them. Pupils have a strong sense of justice and debate moral issues perceptively and sensitively. This was seen when younger pupils spoke about the impact of the holocaust on those of the Jewish faith, and when older pupils thoughtfully and maturely argued the concept of evil and its manifestations.
- 3.16 Pupils are courteous and friendly, freely embracing cultural diversity in a community which is harmonious and welcoming. Individuals from diverse backgrounds say they feel valued and able to share their personal beliefs and traditions without censure. Pupils demonstrate great respect for each other and for those who teach them, dismissing differences as irrelevant to the value of persons, and

working together with a sense of shared purpose. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that school treats their children fairly, regardless of their faith, gender or needs, with a similar proportion of parents and pupils indicating that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Pupils gain a good understanding of world religions through their lessons in religious studies and learn to appreciate cultural differences across a wide variety of disciplines, including modern foreign languages, the humanities, art and music.

- 3.17 Throughout the school community, pupils demonstrate a strong sense of spiritual awareness. Responding to the school ethos of empathy and compassion, pupils display maturity and an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Describing their participation in the annual Remembrance Day, pupils said how playing their instruments enhanced the poignancy of the services. Others find inspiration in the Christmas music or while listening to classical quartet master-classes. Pupils express deep concern for the future of the Earth due to increasing effects of global warming and sympathetically debate the implications of ceasing to treat Alzheimer patients, further deepening their spiritual and moral understanding. The displays of artwork around the school reveal personally meaningful representations of life in a variety of forms. Pupils appreciate and spontaneously take advantage of opportunities for quiet reflection and enjoy the companionship of their friends whether in the dining room or outside in the grounds.
- 3.18 Pupils develop a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, supported by the effective personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme, assemblies and talks from visiting speakers. Pupils discuss the importance of a balanced diet in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, competently evaluating the nutritional information of each dish after practical food technology sessions. Pupils are encouraged to make suitable choices through the wide range of healthy options available in the school dining room. They understand the value of regular exercise, participating with enthusiasm in the open sessions in the fitness room and in the many sporting activities offered by the school. Pupils of all ages understand the value of mental well-being and are appreciative of the excellent provision of counselling available to them. They feel well supported by the arrangements the school has for first aid. The vast majority of parents feel that the school is effective in its safeguarding measures and the very large majority of pupils responding to the questionnaire, said they knew how to stay safe when online.

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 and designated safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended tutor meetings assemblies. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Pamela Leech	Reporting inspector
Caroline Rogerson	Compliance team inspector Assistant head, SofH school)
Mr Nick Brown	Team inspector (Deputy head pastoral, HMC and SofH school)
Sarah Haslam	Team inspector (Head, GSA, HMC school)
Mr Toby Seth	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Peter Sharp	Team inspector (Deputy Head Academic, HMC school)