



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

EWELL CASTLE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ewell Castle School

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| Full Name of School | Ewell Castle School |
| DfE Number | 936/6203 |
| Registered Charity Number | 312079 |
| Address | Ewell Castle School Church Street Ewell Epsom Surrey KT17 2AW |
| Telephone Number | 020 8393 1413 |
| Email Address | principal@ewellcastle.co.uk |
| Principal | Mr Peter Harris |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Peter Durnford-Smith |
| Age Range | 2 to 19 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 533 |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (432 boys; 101 girls) |
| Number of EYFS Children | 46 |
| Ownership and Governance | The school is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The company has a board of governors who are trustees and members of the charity, and are responsible for the governance of the school. |
| School Structure | The school is divided into 3 sections: the pre-preparatory school for pupils aged 2 to 7 (pre-prep); the preparatory school for pupils aged 7 to 11 (prep); and the senior school for pupils aged 11 to 19. All are overseen by two vice principals who report to the principal. |
| Inspection Dates | 13 Oct 2015 to 14 Oct 2015 |

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, this inspection records whether the school complies with each of these Regulations, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Compliance is judged both by written formulation and by implementation. The Regulations represent minimum requirements and are given as either 'met' or not 'met'.

Additionally, inspections consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the Education (Abolition of Corporal Punishment) (Independent Schools) Regulations 1989.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. For children aged from two to five, this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations and related aspects of the EYFS Statutory Framework.

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

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

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

The report reflects the evidence used in deciding whether the school's provision meets or does not meet the various requirements. Grades are not provided for the quality of the school as a whole or for each aspect inspected.

If the school has EYFS registered provision (for children under the age of two), reports use the same evaluative terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.

National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chair of the governing body. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

INSPECTORS

Mr Graham Sims

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Susan Bonell

Compliance Team Inspector (Bursar, Society of Heads School)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ewell Castle School is a day school which caters for boys and girls. The senior school, previously for boys only, recently became mixed; girls now make up a small number of Year 9 pupils and constitute just over one fifth of the sixth form. It is the intention for the senior school to become fully co-educational. The school was founded in 1926 and occupies three sites close to each other in the village of Ewell. The pre-prep is located at Chessington Lodge and the prep school at Glyn House. The senior school occupies a Georgian mansion, the 'Castle', set in 15 acres of grounds.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new vice principal as head of the prep school in September 2012, a new principal in January 2014, and, in September 2014, a new vice principal as deputy head of the senior school and a new director of studies. Girls were first admitted to the sixth form in 2013. A new facility was opened in the summer of 2012, comprising a dining hall and six classrooms.
- 1.3 The pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including both Asian and European nationals, and from a fairly wide area locally. Their parents are largely from business and professional backgrounds.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY STANDARDS

Part 1 Quality of education provided

Curriculum

- 2.1 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.2 The school's curriculum policy is supported by schemes of work and subject plans which take account of the ages, aptitudes, needs and interests of the pupils. The curriculum is implemented effectively in a way which does not undermine the British values of democracy and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It makes effective provision for those who have statements of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. [Paragraph 2(1)(a) & (b)]
- 2.3 Throughout the school, the curriculum covers all of the required areas of learning and ensures that pupils have requisite opportunities to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. [Paragraph 2 (2)(a) & (b)]
- 2.4 A wide-ranging programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is provided through lessons in both prep and senior schools and through the topics covered in tutorial periods and assemblies. Pupils in the senior school are offered impartial careers guidance which helps them to make informed choices about future careers and further education. [Paragraph 2(2)(d) & (e)]
- 2.5 Children in the Nursery and Reception classes follow a programme which is appropriate to their personal, social, emotional and physical development, and helps them to develop communication and language skills. The sixth form curriculum offers a suitable range of options tailored to the pupils' needs and preferences, and a variety of additional activities and responsibilities. [Paragraph 2(2)(f) & (g)]
- 2.6 Throughout the school, pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. The needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or English as an additional language (EAL) are analysed carefully and appropriate support is provided in order to help them make progress. [Paragraph 2(2)(h)]
- 2.7 Pupils are prepared effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in modern Britain. On finishing Year 11, the majority of pupils stay on in the sixth form, with the remainder proceeding to other schools or colleges. At the end of Year 13, most pupils proceed to university or college and a few go directly into employment. [Paragraph 2(2)(i)]

Teaching

- 2.8 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.9 In the sample of lessons observed during the inspection, from the scrutiny of pupils' work, and from the school's records of pupils' progress, the teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and to make good progress in relation to their prior abilities. Teaching is effective in enabling the pupils to behave well and show interest in their work. [Paragraph 3(a) (b) and (h)]
- 2.10 The teaching is carefully and thoughtfully planned, taking into consideration the needs and aptitudes of the pupils. It demonstrates good subject knowledge and an

understanding of how to cater for the youngest children as well as the oldest pupils and those with particular learning needs. Teaching makes effective use of a variety of appropriate resources, including the use of individual laptop computers for those with weaker writing or handwriting skills. [Paragraph 3(c), (e) and (f)]

- 2.11 The school conducts initial assessments when children enter the Nursery and completes the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of Reception. In the rest of the school, staff carry out half-termly assessments which are used to support pupils' learning. Through the appointment of a data manager, the school has taken steps to make more effective use of its assessment information in order to track pupils' progress more closely. Pupils' books are marked regularly but the marking does not always provide constructive advice and guidance on how to improve. [Paragraph 3(d) and (g)]
- 2.12 The teaching does not undermine values that characterise Britishness or discriminate against pupils. The school provides tailored support for pupils with SEND and those with EAL. [Paragraph 3(i) and (j)]
- 2.13 The pupils' attainment in the prep school is measured by standardised assessment tests. In the senior school, pupils take GCSEs and A levels. [Paragraph 4]

How well do pupils achieve?

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Pupils' Ability | The results of standardised tests indicate that the overall ability of the pupils in the pre-prep and prep schools is above average. The ability profile is slightly lower in the senior school, reflecting the wide range of abilities of pupils who join in Years 7 and 9. |
| Pupils' Needs | The school has identified and provides support for one hundred and sixty-two pupils with SEND. The range of needs is very wide, but includes pupils with dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and autistic spectrum disorder. Ten pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Fifty-four pupils speak English as an additional language, but not all of them receive additional specialist support. The school runs two specialist academies, one for tennis and one for cricket, for a small number of pupils who display particular talents in these two sports. |
| Pupils' Achievements | Results in National Curriculum tests at the age of 11 have been above the national average for maintained junior schools in recent years. In GCSE examinations, results have been above the national average for boys in maintained schools. At the age of 18, sixth-form pupils' results at A level have been similar to the national average for boys in maintained schools. |

Part 2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.14 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.15 The school's aims and ethos reflect and actively promote the values which are a fundamental part of British culture. Pupils from different cultures work together harmoniously and show respect for others. [Paragraph 5(a)]
- 2.16 The pupils demonstrate self-confidence in the way they participate in class, converse with adults and put forward their views and ideas. They are courteous and polite, and distinguish right from wrong. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and respect the laws of England. Pupils contribute to the smooth running of the school by undertaking roles of responsibility. Many also show consideration for others through their involvement in charitable events and fundraising. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development in the EYFS. [Paragraph 5(b)(i)-(iii)]
- 2.17 Through their PSHEE lessons, the pupils gain a broad understanding of public institutions and services in England together with a respect for democracy and the basis on which the law is made and applied. Through assemblies, visiting speakers and trips within the country and abroad, they show tolerance of those who are different from themselves and gain an appreciation of the achievements of people from other cultures. [Paragraph 5b(iv)-(vii)]
- 2.18 Within lessons and in the selection of outside speakers, care is taken to ensure a balanced presentation of political views. [Paragraph 5(c) and (d)]

What are pupils' views of the school?

Pupils are asked to respond as 'agree' or 'disagree' with the option to specify 'no view' or not to answer individual questions. Two hundred and forty pupils responded to part or all of the questionnaire. The table below shows the proportions of pupils who responded 'agree' or 'disagree' in relation to each question, and the number who didn't offer a view.

| Percentage return: | % Agree | % Disagree | Number offering no view |
|--|---------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1. I enjoy school | 94 | 5 | 22 |
| 2. I find my lessons interesting and engaging | 92 | 7 | 40 |
| 3. The school gives me the support I need to learn | 95 | 4 | 18 |
| 4. I can get help if I need it | 96 | 3 | 23 |
| 5. The school encourages me to do my best | 96 | 3 | 17 |
| 6. I feel safe and happy at school | 96 | 3 | 27 |
| 7. My views and ideas are listened to in class and in school | 90 | 9 | 33 |
| 8. Behaviour is good in the school | 83 | 16 | 60 |
| 9. Teachers are fair in the way they give rewards | 72 | 27 | 41 |
| 10. Teachers are fair in the way they give sanctions | 59 | 40 | 45 |
| 11. The school deals with bullying | 90 | 9 | 53 |
| 12. There is a member of staff or senior pupil I can turn to if I have a problem | 93 | 6 | 23 |

Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.19 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.20 The school has well-thought-out procedures to promote the welfare of pupils and to keep them safe. The school's safeguarding policy reflects official guidance. The policy is available to staff and parents. Staff receive suitable safeguarding training when they join the school, and all receive regular update training. Concerns about pupils are handled appropriately in conjunction with local agencies. Senior staff with responsibility for safeguarding have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff in the EYFS receive appropriate guidance with regard to the use of mobile phones and cameras. [Paragraphs 7(a) and (b)]
- 2.21 The school has an appropriate behaviour policy which is implemented effectively, resulting in good behaviour throughout. Pupils like the small class sizes, which help them to get to know each other well and promote an atmosphere of friendliness. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils indicated that staff are not fair in the way they issue sanctions and rewards, and a very small minority expressed concern over behaviour. Inspectors found that these views reflect the fact that the school has recently introduced tougher sanctions, such as giving a detention for not handing in homework on time. Pupils and staff acknowledge that these sanctions, although not liked by some pupils, are having the desired effect. [Paragraph 9]
- 2.22 The school's anti-bullying policy takes account of official guidance and is available to parents and staff. It outlines appropriate procedures for dealing with any instances of bullying which, pupils say, are rare. Although a very small minority of parents expressed concerns about the way bullying is dealt with, inspectors found that the very large majority of pupils feel safe in school and none expressed concerns in the pre-inspection questionnaire with regard to the way bullying is dealt with. The school's records show that bullying is taken seriously by staff, stated procedures are followed and all instances are recorded in detail. [Paragraph 10]
- 2.23 The school has thorough procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety. The school's comprehensive policy has regard for latest legislation and guidance. Accommodation, premises and resources are maintained to an appropriate standard, employing outside agencies when necessary to carry out safety checks. [Paragraph 11]
- 2.24 The school has thorough procedures to reduce the risk from fire. Detailed fire risk assessments have been carried out by an external agency for each of the school's three sites. Alarms and fire equipment are serviced regularly. Fire drills are carried out each term and suitably recorded. [Paragraph 12]
- 2.25 Many staff are trained in basic first aid, and an appropriate number have undertaken more advanced first-aid training. In the EYFS, the requisite number of staff have undertaken paediatric first aid training. In all sections of the school, and on trips and visits, an appropriately trained member of staff is always available for any pupil who requires first aid. Medicines are safely stored and appropriate records are kept. [Paragraph 13]
- 2.26 Pupils are appropriately supervised on all three sites. All children in the EYFS have one person who is specifically responsible for their welfare. In the EYFS, staffing levels reflect the required ratios. Staff are familiar with the school's policy in relation to children going missing. [Paragraph 14]

- 2.27 The school maintains an admission register which contains all of the required details for all pupils. Procedures for registering pupils and recording the reasons for absence are meticulous. Attendance records are analysed to identify any trends in absence. The electronic registers are backed up regularly and stored for the requisite amount of time. [Paragraph 15]
- 2.28 The school has drawn up appropriate policies for risk assessments and educational trips and visits. Staff have received training from an external provider on the production of risk assessments, which are undertaken for many areas of the school including in the EYFS, and for all school trips and visits. Where risks are identified, appropriate action is taken to minimise them. [Paragraph 16]

Other legislation

- 2.29 Corporal punishment is not used or threatened. [The Education (Abolition of Corporal Punishment) (Independent schools) Regulations 1989]
- 2.30 The school has an accessibility plan to improve information, the curriculum and physical access for pupils with SEND. [Equality Act 2010]

Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- 2.31 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.32 Following the previous inspection, the school has revised and significantly strengthened its procedures for carrying out recruitment checks on new staff. All necessary checks are now carried out prior to the start of employment in accordance with carefully devised procedures. Where there is a delay in obtaining a criminal record check, all other checks, including a barred list check, are completed and a thorough risk assessment is carried out before allowing the member of staff to commence employment. Suitable references and medical declarations are received. All staff who work with children under the age of eight have made suitable declarations that they are not living in the same household as a person who is debarred from working with children. [Paragraph 18]
- 2.33 Where the school uses staff who are employed by another organisation, it seeks written assurance from the employer that all required checks have been carried out. The school undertakes the necessary checks on governors. [Paragraphs 19 and 20]
- 2.34 The school maintains a comprehensive and meticulously completed single central register of appointments which records all of the recruitment checks carried out on each member of staff, supply staff, governors and volunteers. [Paragraph 21]

Part 5 Premises and accommodation

- 2.35 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.36 Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided on all three school sites. In the senior school, showers are available for pupils to use after sports lessons. Drinking water is available at various points around the school site. Hot water is maintained at a safe temperature. [Paragraphs 23 and 28]
- 2.37 The school provides appropriate accommodation for the examination and short-term care of sick and injured pupils. [Paragraph 24]
- 2.38 The premises, accommodation and facilities are appropriately maintained to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pupils. Lighting and acoustic conditions in teaching rooms are suitable. The school has sufficient exterior lighting to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the premises. [Paragraphs 25, 26 and 27]
- 2.39 Pupils on all three sites have access to suitable outdoor areas for recreation at break and lunchtimes. Suitable outdoor facilities for physical education at the senior school are also used by pupils in the pre-prep and prep schools. [Paragraph 29]

Part 6 Provision of information

- 2.40 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.41 Parents are informed in the prep school about their children's progress through twice-yearly written reports and interim grade sheets, and they also have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress at two formal parents' evenings each year. The school's frequent communication with parents of children in the EYFS keeps them fully informed about how well their children are doing. Parents of senior school pupils are informed about their children's progress through annual written reports and parents' evenings, in addition to regular grade reports and feedback. A comprehensive range of information about the school and access to many of its policies and procedures are made available to parents of current and prospective pupils through the school's website. [Paragraph 32]

Part 7 Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.42 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.43 The school's complaints policy provides clear guidance to staff and parents on the procedures for handling complaints. The policy is available to parents and staff. The school handles concerns in accordance with these procedures and keeps detailed records of any concerns and action taken as a result. Complaints received during the previous school year were all resolved at the first informal stage of the procedure. A very large majority of parents feel their concerns are dealt with in a timely manner. [Paragraph 33]

Part 8 Quality of leadership and management

- 2.44 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.45 The school's senior leaders and the governing body demonstrate requisite understanding of the regulations for independent schools and fulfil their responsibilities effectively by ensuring that all of the standards are met and implemented consistently. Governance and leadership take full cognisance of the

statutory guidance for the EYFS. Leaders and managers ensure that the quality of education is appropriate in all three sections of the school and actively promote the well-being of pupils. [Paragraph 34]

What are parents' views of the school?

Parents are asked to respond as 'agree' or 'disagree' with the option to specify 'no view' or not to answer individual questions. Two hundred and thirty-seven parents responded to part or all of the questionnaire. The table below shows the proportions of parents who responded 'agree' or 'disagree' in relation to each question, and the number who didn't offer a view.

| Percentage return: | % Agree | % Disagree | Number offering no view |
|--|---------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1. My child is happy at the school. | 97 | 2 | 2 |
| 2. My child is making good progress at the school. | 96 | 3 | 21 |
| 3. My child feels safe at the school. | 98 | 1 | 4 |
| 4. My child is well looked after at the school. | 97 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. The school actively promotes good behaviour. | 98 | 1 | 2 |
| 6. There is someone for my child to go to if problems arise in the school. | 98 | 1 | 14 |
| 7. The school welcomes my views. | 95 | 4 | 33 |
| 8. The school deals well with bullying. | 86 | 13 | 57 |
| 9. Behaviour is well managed. | 95 | 5 | 17 |
| 10. I receive good information about my child's progress, the school's policies and activities/events. | 94 | 5 | 16 |
| 11. I receive timely responses to my questions, concerns and complaints. | 95 | 4 | 16 |
| 12. My child has access to a broad curriculum. | 96 | 4 | 12 |
| 13. My child's individual educational needs are being met at school. | 93 | 6 | 23 |
| 14. I would recommend the school to another parent. | 95 | 4 | 25 |

3. SUMMARY OF REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

| | All requirements met? |
|--|-----------------------|
| Part 1 Quality of education provided (curriculum) | Yes |
| Part 1 Quality of education provided (teaching) | Yes |
| Part 2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils | Yes |
| Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils, including Other legislation | Yes |
| Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors | Yes |
| Part 5 Premises and accommodation | Yes |
| Part 6 Provision of information | Yes |
| Part 7 Manner in which complaints are handled | Yes |
| Part 8 Quality of leadership and management | Yes |

Action points

3.1 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Progress since the previous inspection

3.2 The two required actions from the previous inspection were to: ensure that all safeguarding checks on staff are carried out and recorded before or as soon as practicable after appointment; and implement identity checks on supply staff before they begin work. The governing body has been swift to implement these actions. The previous weaknesses in the school's recruitment procedures have been rectified by: drawing up and implementing a new recruitment policy; ensuring that every member of staff has received the requisite checks; ensuring that the single central register of appointments contains all of the required information for every new member of staff; and regular monitoring by the chair of governors and principal to verify that all checks have been carried out before appointment.