



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR NORWICH STEINER SCHOOL

DfE No: 926/6154

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	Good	2
Pupils' personal development	Outstanding	1
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	Good	2
Leadership, management and governance	Good	2
Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision	Good	2

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Date of inspection: 28 February – 02 March 2017

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The overall quality of education provided by Norwich Steiner School is good. Pupils' achievement is also good, although the quality and pace of their learning varies between classes and between some subjects in the Upper School. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, but it varies unduly because some teachers have limited subject knowledge which adversely affects pupils' learning in some subjects, such as mathematics and science. The management has identified where the weaknesses lie and is addressing them. Assessment has been developed significantly recently. The school has devised assessments which enable pupils' progress to be tracked more effectively than previously. Information from assessment is used to plan lessons although the work is still at an early stage and requires further development particularly in the Lower School. The quality of the curriculum is good. The Steiner Waldorf curriculum has been augmented in recent years by the Steiner School Certificate (SSC). The first cohort of pupils is due to complete this by the end of the current academic year. The Certificate provides a broad curriculum and has been recognised by several universities for entrance purposes.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Careers guidance is provided for the older pupils, but is not systematically developed throughout the Upper School. Behaviour is generally excellent and there is particularly strong cooperation between pupils, including support for younger pupils from older ones. Leadership and management are good, being strong and effective, and under continual review. Management groups have been developed to address the school's identified needs and self-evaluation is clear, accurate and rigorous. The effectiveness of the school's strategic planning is evident in the extension into the 16 to 19 age range. Planning and administration for this sixth form group is particularly good. The early years' provision is good: its planning and organisation are especially good.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- improve the quality and consistency of teaching by ensuring that teachers have good subject knowledge especially in mathematics and science;
- develop a more systematic approach to careers guidance throughout the Upper School, involving all subjects; and
- develop further the use and analysis of assessment, especially in the Lower School, to identify pupils' progress and to support teachers' planning.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE). The school was given two days' notice of inspection.

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed a range of lessons and examined samples of the pupils' work in the Lower and Upper Schools. The school's curriculum documentation, policies and records were scrutinised. Interviews were held with a number of staff and trustees and the inspectors spoke to groups of pupils. They also took account of the questionnaires completed by pupils and parents before the inspection.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Dr Martin Bradley
Team inspectors:	Mrs Sue Frater
Steiner Community Consultant:	Mrs Sally Jenkinson

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Norwich Steiner School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged three to nineteen years old. It received permission from the Department for Education to raise its upper age limit to 19 in August 2016. The school is located in the Lakenham district of Norwich. It is inspired by the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner as interpreted through the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. At the time of the inspection there were 111 pupils on roll of whom 11 were in the Kindergarten. This is an increase on the number at the time of the last inspection in May 2014, when there were 79 pupils. Most classes are composed of two year groups. Two pupils have education and health care plans.

School names	Class	Steiner classes	National curriculum	
Orchard Kindergarten		Kindergarten	Nursery Year R, Year 1	Kindergarten
Rowan		Class 1	Year 2	Lower School
Maple		Class 2/3	Year 3/4	Do.
Sequoia		Class 5/6	Year 5/6	Do.
Willow		Class 6/7	Year 7/8	Do.
Oak		Class 8/9	Year 9/10	Upper School
Birch		Class 10/11	Year 11/12	Do.
Elder		Class 12/13	Year 13/14	Do.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Pupils' learning and achievement are good. In some subjects, such as history, English, the history of art, philosophy and drama, pupils make outstanding progress from their different starting points and attain exceptionally well in these areas of the SSC. The school has rightly identified that pupils' progress in mathematics and science throughout the school is variable and this leads to gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils' ability to reflect on the quality of their learning is exceptional. They are self-motivated, confident, articulate and know how to learn. They willingly engage in homework and extra-curricular activities. Pupils develop good communication skills through the many opportunities they have to present and explain their work. Their progress in developing speaking and listening and reading is good, but their progress in writing skills is less rapid.

Pupils who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language respond well to the additional support provided. They make good progress from their starting points. The most able pupils attain high standards in the SSC modules. They know specifically what they need to do to improve their work and are highly motivated to do so. They make good progress. Pupils are well-prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Nonetheless, there are significant variations in the quality of teaching: despite two thirds of the lessons seen being good or outstanding, the remainder required improvement or were inadequate, which has an adverse effect on pupils' learning and progress. This occurs where some teachers have limited subject knowledge for example of mathematics and science, although these subjects are also extremely well taught elsewhere in the school by those with expertise. The school has begun to identify strategies to address these weaknesses, including increased monitoring of the quality of teaching. In discussion, pupils showed that they were aware of the issue. The quality of teaching in the majority of Lower School classes is often outstanding. Despite the small size of some classes, the pace of teaching is particularly rapid, with good attention being paid to supporting and encouraging pupils' concentration and perseverance. In such lessons, the pupils' enjoyment of learning is most evident. As the class teacher stays with the same group of pupils from class 1 to class 8, the quality of their teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning and progress. In the best lessons, teachers provide detailed feedback throughout the lesson, marking pupils' writing, discussing with them how to develop their ideas and getting them to read back what they have written to assess their understanding of the work.

In the Upper School, including the oldest three year groups who are working on the SSC, much of the specialist teaching is outstanding. Textiles and woodwork clearly identify skills of precision and concentration and the pupils make significant progress, working enthusiastically.

The quality of assessment is good. In the Lower School, information on pupils' progress has been gathered for some years, and the recent introduction of spreadsheets supports analysis of individual pupils' progress in each subject, with colour coding used to highlight attainment at four levels. Not all of the criteria used in each subject are comparable across subjects. The analysis of the information to track and promote individual pupil's progress is at an early stage, but the school recognises that as more data from the regular assessments of individual pupils become available, these will form a most useful tool to identify needs and thereby further promote learning. In the Upper School, the on-going assessment of the SSC identifies pupils' levels of achievement and the potential standard of their final award.

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and includes a good range of language, mathematics, sciences, creative and expressive arts subjects as well as woodwork, textiles and philosophy. Besides discrete lessons, subjects and activities are taught in combination in daily main lessons, following a theme for approximately two or four weeks. The curriculum promotes the Steiner principles of intellectual, physical and spiritual development effectively.

The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of visits and visiting speakers. Visits have included: overseas trips, Hadrian's Wall, Cambridge, the Globe Theatre London, a range of sports activities and a local rural life museum. Visiting speakers have covered topics including university life, mental health and self-harm, homelessness, cyber safety, science, politics, apprenticeships, and role play sessions conducted by the University of East Anglia law school.

Most pupils in the Upper School study for the SSC. The school does not offer other external examinations. The three-year externally moderated course leads to a level three qualification approved and registered by the New Zealand government. It comprises a range of well-planned core and optional modules each with learning objectives that support progression in pupils' knowledge and skills over the three years. This is the first year in which pupils at the school are completing the final year of the SSC. University applicants have been offered provisional places at several universities. A few pupils have applied for courses in local further education colleges or are considering apprenticeships. Pupils in the sixth form also complete an independent study project, for example building a violin or writing an essay on cryptography.

Curriculum planning supports pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language very well as it meets their specific

needs. Where necessary, pupils receive additional learning support. The pupils make good progress.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. The quality of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and the curriculum makes a strong contribution to these aspects of pupils' personal development. Fundamental British values are promoted effectively and are demonstrated in pupils' actions and contributions to school life. The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law and tolerance of views and ideas different from their own. A sense of fairness is developed initially through play and stories. It is extended through studies of the Romans and their society as well as through work on modern society. Pupils' broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England is good. They are encouraged to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. They can distinguish right from wrong and respect the law and the democratic process. They learn how to be responsible citizens in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.

Pupils act responsibly and are able to cooperate well. There have been many projects in the school grounds involving pupils' active participation, as well as older pupils making equipment for younger ones, such as a rag rug for the Kindergarten, and outside remodelling of the grounds for them. One class recently won Norwich in Bloom's 'Best Pumpkin' award.

Provision for personal, social health and economic education (PSHEE) is good. Prior to the European referendum the local Member of Parliament visited the school to discuss the issues with the older pupils. In PSHEE lessons pupils learn to live safely and to adopt healthy lifestyles. The school has rightly addressed cyber bullying and the dangers of social media in its PSHEE curriculum. Parents spoke highly of this work and the pupils acknowledged that they were aware of the issues.

Whilst careers advice is provided for the older pupils, this approach is not sufficiently systematic throughout the Upper School and does not include all subject teachers who could provide advice on possibilities in their own areas. Pupils in the Upper School are responsible for arranging their own work experience, with support from school staff.

Pupils' behaviour overall is excellent. Generally they have very positive attitudes towards learning. These are actively supported by the school's pro-active pastoral care system and by the staff's outstanding knowledge of the pupils. A number of the pupils join the school following difficulties elsewhere. Careful steps are taken by a range of staff to support each pupil and to ensure a smooth transition into the school.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are good. The designated leaders for safeguarding have created a culture of vigilance with regard to keeping children safe. They ensure that policies and staff training are up-to-date with the latest government guidance. This includes training to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Staff apply agreed child protection and safeguarding procedures confidently and consistently. Records are well maintained and any issues are followed up appropriately. Leaders liaise very well with a wide range of external agencies in order to meet pupils' specific needs. They also provide effective support for families.

The school has set out clear procedures for dealing with bullying in its anti-bullying policy. Pupils say they are confident to share any concerns with staff in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. Pupils say that there are few incidents of bullying and that they feel safe in school. Through lessons such as PSHEE, and visiting speakers, pupils are taught how to keep safe, especially from cyber-bullying. Expectations of appropriate behaviour, as outlined in the behaviour policy, are reinforced by staff. The school supports effectively pupils who initially find it difficult to regulate their own behaviour. Pupils say, and inspectors agree, that behaviour in lessons is good. Leaders have identified the need for pupils to move around the school in a more orderly way and they ensure that pupils are supervised well at break and lunchtimes. Pupils play well together across the year groups.

All the required checks for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff are carried out and recorded appropriately in a single central register.

Arrangements for securing pupils' welfare, health and safety are comprehensive. Fire precautions, including a detailed risk assessment, are reviewed regularly. Actions such as termly fire drills are recorded appropriately. Suitable facilities and procedures are in place to support pupils' medical needs. Staff have received recent training in health and safety. Several staff are trained in first aid and pupils can explain what to do in the event of an accident. Risk assessments for activities in school and for visits off site are carried out and recorded appropriately. Attendance and admissions registers are well maintained. Most pupils attend school regularly and staff follow up any absence robustly.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management are good and have developed significantly during the past year. The school has a clear ethos which is reflected in the pupils' outstanding personal development and behaviour. The leadership has a clear vision for the school's educational development, as is illustrated by the extension of its provision to include pupils aged 16 to 19, and by the introduction of the SCC. The extension of the age range in September 2016 has required revision of the use of accommodation and this remains under review. Most classes are composed of two year groups, although there are some differences in numbers in each group, with physical space for additional pupils being available in some classrooms. The premises are adequate for current

needs. Despite the age of the premises, built in 1863, the day-to-day upkeep is of a high standard. The senior managers know the school very well and work hard and effectively to bring about improvement. They are self-critical and have accurately identified areas which require development as well as planning the means of rectifying them. The inspectors agree with their analysis of the school's needs and priorities. Staff professional development is generally good, although in some areas greater use could be made of support from the Steiner Fellowship as well as beyond the immediate locality. The management of safeguarding is good and training is up to date. The relationship between the Kindergarten provision and the older classes has been considered and action has been taken to relate their teaching and curriculum more closely. The Class 1 teacher is a member of the Kindergarten staff group.

Information for parents is appropriate although examples of pupils' work and achievements are limited on the website and in publicity material. Procedures for handling complaints are good.

Governance

The school continues to review its organisation of governance. There is particularly good planning for the development of the Trustees' roles, linking these to senior managers' roles. The school's mission statement includes reference to ensuring clear lines of leadership and accountability. This includes establishing management groups including the Trustees' Governance Group, the Management Team, Faculty Groups to promote pedagogical excellence and monitor teaching practice, as well as groups for the staff of the Kindergarten, Lower and Upper Schools and a group addressing the school ethos. A safeguarding team has been established, as has a services team dealing with finance, premises, health and safety administration and personnel. Each group has a defined purpose and remit with a programme of meetings. This structure is kept under review to ensure that it does not become too cumbersome and remains effective. The Trustees know the independent school standards well and work very effectively with managers to ensure that these are met. Together with the Management Team they provide effective challenge and support to the school.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION

The overall effectiveness of the early years' provision is good. The children make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points and are appropriately prepared for the next stage in their education. The setting's provision meets the needs of the children. The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. They are happy and feel safe and secure. The requirements for safeguarding and welfare are fully met and adults both in the Kindergarten and the school share a clear understanding of and responsibility for protecting children. Leadership and management have exemplary systems for planning and recording. This helps to enable improvement in children's life chances.

Leadership and management are good. The Kindergarten staff have identified the need to differentiate the activities offered to the older children, extending their experiences. Currently the purposes of these activities are not sufficiently related to areas of learning, as for example where puppet making might involve physical skills, coordination, cutting, sewing, ensuring that the puppets' limbs are similarly sized, and the language skills used during the making process. Whilst many of these elements are pursued, they are not directly identified as integral purposes, and consequently the children's learning cannot be easily evaluated. Staff performance management systems are good. The learning programmes are broad and relevant, and the children are appropriately prepared for the next stage in their learning. Equality and diversity are promoted well, and the children's extremely good behaviour is a strength of the Kindergarten. British values are promoted effectively and all statutory and other government requirements are met, promoting their welfare and preventing extremism.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. At times, teaching is not sufficiently pro-active in encouraging cooperative play and use of materials. The differentiated provision for the older children in the age group ranging from three to rising seven years demonstrates the high expectations of the Kindergarten staff regarding their achievement. There is regular contact with most parents, encouraging them to support their children's learning and providing information on children's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are strengths of the provision and are outstanding. There is a positive ethos in the Kindergarten. Children enjoy their learning: their spoken language is outstanding, as is their social and emotional development. They are emotionally secure and have excellent relationships with the adults. Attendance is regular and prompt. The children learn how to keep themselves safe and how to remain healthy. They have access to a range of cultural experiences which enable them to respect others and to contribute to life in the Kindergarten.

The outcomes for children are good. They make good progress from their different starting points and meet or exceed the level of development typical for their age. This enables them to move to the next stage of their education confidently. The school continues to develop ways in which this transition can be made ever more seamless.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Norwich Steiner School			
Address of school:	Hospital Lane Norwich NR1 2HW			
Telephone number:	01603611175			
Email address:	info@norwichsteinerschool.co.uk			
Web address	www.norwichsteinerschool.co.uk			
Proprietor:	The Trustees of Norwich Steiner School			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Chair of trustees: John Hales			
School Administrator:	School Administrator: Sandie Tolhurst Chair of Faculty: Michael Higgins			
Early Years Manager	Debora Walker			
DfE Number	926/6154			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	Upper School £6,800 / year Lower School £6,340 / year Kindergarten £3,717 / year (for five sessions a week)			
Age range of pupils	3.25 – 19 years			
Gender of pupils	Mixed			
Total number on roll	full-time		part-time	
Number of children under-5	Boys:	1	Girls:	6
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	47	Girls:	40
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	9	Girls:	8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	1	Girls:	1
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	2	Girls:	5
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.