



## **SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE**

# **INSPECTION REPORT FOR YORK STEINER SCHOOL**

**DfE No: 816/6008**

### **The key inspection judgements for this school are:**

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

### **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: 22-24 November 2016**

## **SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

York Steiner School provides a good education for its pupils. It meets all of the Independent School Standards. Pupils' learning and achievement are good. Most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and by the time they leave the school they reach standards which are in line with or above those expected nationally. The quality of teaching and assessment is good but in a very small number of classes or subjects pupils do not progress as well as they should because the teaching they receive does not meet their needs. The curriculum is good and it is enriched by the very good use the school makes of its location in the City of York to visit places of interest. Pupils acquire a good understanding of the cultures, faiths and lifestyles in modern British society. They learn about the British values of democracy, equality, liberty and the rule of law. Their personal development is good. Most pupils behave very well in class and demonstrate empathy towards their peers and teachers, but where teaching is less than good pupils' behaviour deteriorates. A few parents expressed concern about the behaviour of some pupils in a small number of classes and pupils in these classes said that their learning was sometimes disrupted by other pupils. Pupils' behaviour during social times is good and they are courteous to their peers, staff and visitors. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, including the safe recruitment of staff. Leadership and management are good. The trustees and the school management group (SMG) work together very effectively so that the school is well led and managed. Most parents are very positive about the school but some felt that they did not know whom to contact about any issues that might occur. The provision made for children in the Kindergarten is good.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- ensure that all teaching is at least good;
- ensure that all pupils behave well in lessons; and
- improve communication with parents by providing information about whom to contact with any questions or concerns.

## **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).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons throughout the school in a range of subjects and examined samples of pupils' work. They observed the life of the school including at break and lunchtimes. They scrutinised the school's documentation, records and website. The inspectors held discussions with pupils, staff and trustees and took account of the views of parents expressed through a pre-inspection questionnaire.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Christine Graham
Team inspector:	Mr Jonathan Palk
Steiner Community Consultant:	Mrs Sally Jenkinson

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:**

York Steiner School was established in 1980. It caters for pupils aged from 3-14. There are 215 pupils on roll. The school has identified twenty three pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN and disabilities). No pupil has an education and health care plan. There are sixteen pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Steiner's philosophy, his views on child development and psychology underpin the school's educational approach. The school promotes the values of social awareness and personal responsibility. The ambition of staff is that when pupils leave the school they will be well equipped intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to meet the challenges of the future.

The Kindergarten has received exemptions from aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage and from completing the Early Years Profile. In common with other Steiner Waldorf schools there is no head teacher and management rests with the trustees and the SMG. The school follows the Steiner Waldorf system for naming classes. The corresponding National Curriculum names for classes in the school at the time of the inspection are:

<b>Steiner Class Names</b>	<b>National Curriculum Year Groups</b>
Kindergarten	Nursery, Year R, Year 1
Class 1	Year 2
Class 2	Year 3
Class 3	Year 4
Class 4	Year 5
Class 5	Year 6
Class 6	Year 7
Class 7	Year 8
Class 8	Year 9

## **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. Pupils in almost all classes make good progress from their individual starting points. In most classes pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are well prepared for lessons, listen carefully to instructions or explanations and participate well in discussion. The school promotes a positive culture within which pupils are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and they respond very positively to this. Some older pupils said that they did not feel as if they 'failed' at anything and this increased their confidence and motivation. Pupils commented that they know they are making progress because they look back to work completed earlier in the year and they can see how much they have improved. In a small minority of classes some pupils are not sufficiently well focused on learning and they disrupt their own learning and that of others. This is particularly the case when teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently well or when the tasks they are given are too difficult. In most classes pupils co-operate very well and their behaviour is excellent. They listen carefully to their teachers and are sensitive to the concerns of their peers, often offering positive support and reinforcement to a member of the class. By the end of their time in school most pupils reach the standards expected for their age and many pupils achieve more than this. Pupils achieve particularly well in art, handwork and in music. They can write at length and their spelling, grammar and use of punctuation are very good. They achieve well in mathematics and science. Pupils learn to persevere with tasks even when they are challenging and they are encouraged always to produce their best possible work. Pupils are very articulate and use formal and persuasive language well, as was demonstrated in a class debate when pupils argued the need or otherwise for a standardised system of currency. There are sixteen students who have English as an additional language. None of these students is at an early stage of speaking English and so no additional support is required or provided, as they all speak and write English fluently and cope well with whole class teaching. They make good progress and their attitudes to learning are very good.

#### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Most teachers have a very thorough understanding of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum and they plan lessons which meet the needs of all of the pupils in the class. In the most effective lessons the pace of teaching is brisk and teachers' expectations of what pupils will achieve are appropriately high. Teachers explain new learning well and ask questions which allow all pupils to respond successfully. In these lessons pupils feel confident and secure and are happy to ask questions in order to clarify their understanding. The tasks that pupils are given are interesting and enthuse them, helping to promote a love of learning. Teachers provide very effective support for pupils during lessons and this helps to eradicate any misunderstandings and

accelerates pupils' progress. Where teaching is less good teachers' expectations of pupil progress and behaviour are too low and the tasks pupils are given are too easy or too difficult for them. The pace of these lessons is too slow and some pupils become bored and uninterested. In these lessons teachers do not react quickly enough to minor behavioural incidents allowing these to escalate and disrupt teaching and learning. Some pupils said that that the behaviour of a small minority of pupils disrupted their learning. Senior leaders have an accurate view of teaching and learning within the school. There are constructive procedures to support staff and to share good practice. There is an annual appraisal system for teachers and a school advisor works with the staff. There is a mandate holder for education who has the responsibility for overseeing all aspects of education within the school. The effectiveness of teaching and learning are discussed at SMG and trustees' meetings.

The school has an assessment system which is used by all teachers in the main school. The curriculum has been broken down into a number of learning aims and objectives and these are assessed regularly by teachers. Very thorough annual reports identify the progress made by individual pupils. Most teachers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils in their class, and tactful and unobtrusive guidance is provided in lessons for those that need it. The school is aware of the needs of the most able pupils and in most lessons they receive appropriately challenging work. Younger pupils receive effective oral feedback while they are working on a task. This is very helpful since it reassures pupils that they are on the right track or helps to eradicate misconceptions. As is usual in Steiner schools, the books of older pupils are carefully marked and they receive written feedback. Formal assessment tasks are introduced for the older pupils.

### **The quality of the curriculum**

The curriculum is good. It meets all the regulatory requirements and the school's aims, thus helping to ensure that all pupils make progress. The curriculum follows the Steiner Waldorf principles of intellectual, physical and spiritual development. There is an effective curriculum statement which is well supported by the school's policies, schemes of work and resources. Effective curriculum planning ensures a smooth transition between Kindergarten and Class 1 and prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. The organisation of the curriculum ensures that pupils have time to consolidate new learning. There is in-built repetition of skills and knowledge and this supports those pupils who need more time to consolidate new skills and knowledge. Pupils' build on the skills they have acquired in earlier years, this is particularly the case in art and handwork where the practical application and improvement of skills can be seen very clearly and it is also the case in academic subjects. This approach results in self-confident learners who are willing to accept new challenges and are not afraid to make mistakes.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN and disabilities) is good. Pupils who experience difficulty with aspects of learning are identified very promptly. The teaching staff and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) discuss individual pupils' needs and agree further support. Where appropriate pupils are placed on intervention programmes which always include additional support provided by the class teacher or SENCo. Records of

pupils' progress scrutinised during the inspection attest that this support is very effective.

The school makes the most of all that the City of York has to offer to enrich the curriculum: pupils visit places of historical interest; the countryside around the city and special events such as a ploughing festival which takes place each year. There are extra- curricular activities mostly focused on music and the arts which further extend pupils' learning.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good awareness of other faiths and beliefs. The wide range of cultural backgrounds in the school encourages an understanding, and appreciation of their own and other cultures in Britain, as for example, when they learn about the celebration of Michaelmas, Diwali and Hanukkah. The school reinforces and extends the strong moral code that pupils bring with them from Kindergarten and home through a rich experience of storytelling. They are encouraged to reflect on what is good in the world and give thanks for it. An understanding of British democratic values is an important aspect of the school's approach to developing positive attitudes and behaviour. Pupils show good awareness of democracy and have taken part in mock elections and in voting for School Council members. The school ensures, where appropriate, that pupils receive a balanced presentation of opposing views and that the promotion of partisan political views is precluded from any aspect of teaching or the life of the school. Pupils know about public institutions and services in England. They support charities which include those in the local area and raise money to support Steiner schools in other countries. Pupils carry out responsibilities within their own class or in the wider school community, older pupils support Class 1 children in assembly or help out in the school café and younger pupils carry out tasks within their class.

The school's provision for personal, social and health and economic education is strong. It is taught through a comprehensive curriculum that covers topics that are relevant to pupils as they grow up. The impact of this provision is assessed so that adjustments can be made to the curriculum for each class. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils' behaviour is good, and most behave exceptionally well. They are pleasant, moral and self-reflective individuals who show great sensitivity to others. They are courteous to their teachers, peers and visitors and they have a strong sense of right and wrong. They get on well with others and are always willing to help or befriend their peers. Whilst for the most part they show respect for each other and for their teachers there are times when a minority of pupils misbehave. This takes the form of calling out or talking over the teacher. Teachers do not always challenge these behaviours which adversely affect learning.

Pupils in Class 8 benefit from effective careers education and guidance. They learn about a range of careers and the skills and knowledge relevant to them. The school has strong links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Pupils are given very effective support when choosing GCSE options.

### **3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The provision for pupils' welfare health and safety is good. The staff look after, care for and safeguard pupils well. Pupils say that the staff are very accessible. Their excellent relationships with their teachers combined with effective implementation of policies and procedures ensure that their welfare needs are met.

The safeguarding team have received appropriate training and understand their responsibilities, including those for preventing radicalisation. The daily routines for keeping pupils safe work effectively. Concerns are clearly recorded and acted upon speedily. Staff knowledge takes account of the new duties expressed in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*. Staff consider they are well supported by trustees and the SMG in implementing their responsibilities to keep pupils safe.

Pupils do not use the internet or computers while in school but the school has appropriate policies for e-safety which are aligned to local and national expectations. Training is provided for all staff and parents. There is structured teaching of e-safety for older pupils but that provided for younger pupils is not as well organised. The school has an effective behaviour and anti-bullying policy. There have been no serious behaviour incidents recorded this year and very few over time. Pupils say there is very little bullying and if it does occur it is dealt with quickly. Pupils' extremely positive view of themselves combined with their resilience and capacity for resolving issues makes a strong contribution to keeping incidents to a minimum.

Appropriate checks are made on all staff before they are employed at the school including references being sought and disclosure and barring checks obtained. A good level of training is provided by the trustees for those staff involved in recruitment and in the maintenance of the single central record.

The school premises are safe, although in parts in need of some redecoration. The building is spacious and it has a library, specialist teaching rooms, a café which is used at lunchtimes and a large hall. The school also has the use of a large field which is available to pupils at break and lunchtimes. The outdoor areas are safe and complement the outdoor education programme. Pupils look after the building well and it is enhanced by the attractive displays of their artwork.

The school's management has ensured compliance with all aspects of welfare, health and safety. Fire drills are carried out regularly and the results are recorded. Fire equipment is checked annually. The potential risks to pupils during activities in school and during visits to places of interest are assessed and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that pupils are safe. The knowledgeable and committed school management group is diligent in responding to any perceived risk. Documents, including admissions and attendance registers, are thorough and detailed. Procedures for first aid are all in place and very well organised.

## **4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management are good. There is a clear vision for the school which has been developed over time. The staff, through the SMG, and trustees are responsible for managing the school. There are five mandate groups; education, finance, human resources, public and parental relations and estates, which cover all aspects of the management of the school. Each group has a mandate holder who gathers information and collates reports about outcomes in the area. There are regular meetings of the SMG in which mandate holders report on their area of responsibility, discuss issues or make plans to develop the school further. The chair of trustees attends all SMG meetings and this ensures he is well informed about the life of the school. Information collected by mandate groups is shared with trustees. The SMG and trustees work together very effectively; they regularly review their organisational practices and implement any necessary change. This ability to carry out robust self-evaluation has ensured that the school meets all the standards required for continued registration as an independent school and it allows mandate holders and trustees to plan effectively for the future. The school administrator provides a clear link between staff, trustees and external agencies. There is annual performance management for teachers which is carried out by an external appraiser. There are good opportunities for continued professional development (CPD), including on-line safeguarding training. All members of the school community exhibit a warmth and openness which allows pupils to enjoy their education and adults their working lives. The school meets the Independent School Standards for premises and accommodation, information to parents and handling complaints. The school's relationships with parents are effective and most parents say that they are happy with all that the school provides, however, a few parents feel that they do not know whom to contact with any issue that might arise.

### **Governance**

Governance is good. The trustees are experienced and very committed to the success and sustainability of the school. They have received appropriate training for their roles, for example, on safeguarding. All trustees have clearly defined roles and responsibilities often linked to an area of personal expertise. The trustees are well informed about the requirements of the Independent School Standards and have ensured that they are met. They manage the school's finances well in order to bring about continuous improvement, for example in extending the Kindergarten provision in order to meet an identified need. The chair of trustees attends all SMG meetings and the minutes of management and trustee meetings are shared with staff where appropriate. The management structure of the school ensures that leaders and managers carry out their responsibilities effectively.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION**

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good. Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers have a very clear

understanding of the purposes and objectives of the Steiner Kindergarten curriculum and the parallel EYFS guidance on learning and development. Staff have high expectations of what the children can achieve over the three years they spend in Kindergarten. They know the children and their educational capabilities very well. This informs their planning of children's learning and contributes to children's consistently good and sometimes excellent progress. The close collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants creates highly effective teaching teams. Together they provide a judicious combination of teacher-led and child-initiated activities that engage children's interest and promote their enthusiasm for learning. The team creates a purposeful and positive learning environment that is conducive to high achievement. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's oral skills and their capacity to think creatively and critically. Teachers' high expectations combined with the quality of their work and pedagogical expertise are important factors in the children's high levels of achievement.

Teaching staff regularly assess the children's progress. Comments in classrooms and teachers' planning clearly indicate they have an excellent understanding of what children know, understand and can do and how they can make further progress in their learning. Assessment records are very detailed. Throughout the Kindergarten children achieve outcomes, particularly in communication, social and manipulative skills, which are excellent in relation to their ability. They feel safe and secure and their behaviour, confidence and enjoyment of learning mean they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes excellent progress in their learning and their personal development.

Relationships with parents and carers are very good. There are very good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with staff during informal meetings and through the more formal reports on children's progress and formal parents' meetings. Parents receive a copy of the curriculum at the beginning of the year but the information about the Kindergarten and provision for the early year's foundation stage on the school's website is out of date. The Kindergarten's effective links with Class 1 ensure a smooth transition between the Kindergarten and the main school.

Kindergarten leaders have managed the recent changes in staffing and organisation very successfully and ensured that provision has improved since the last inspection. Staff checks have been carried out meticulously and experienced Steiner kindergarten teachers have been recruited. Promoting the British values of courtesy, equality, celebration of diversity, fairness and justice are embedded in the aims and ethos of the school and are very much reflected in the practice of Kindergarten staff and their expectations of children. These values provide very strong protection against radicalisation and extremism. The effective model of collaborative management adopted by the staff helps to ensure a strong consistency in the quality of planning, teaching, assessment and care of all children, including their safeguarding and welfare. Leadership and management are effective in supporting all aspects of the provision. The recently appointed manager is addressing the lack of systems for performance management and quality assurance, and linking this to good opportunities for staff development.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	York Steiner School			
Address of school:	Danesmead. Fulford Cross. York YO10 4PB			
Telephone number:	01904 654983			
Email address:	<a href="mailto:info@yorksteinerschool.org">info@yorksteinerschool.org</a>			
Web address	<a href="http://www.yorksteinerschool.org">www.yorksteinerschool.org</a>			
Proprietor:	The Council of Management of York Steiner School			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Marc Walker			
Administrator:	Maurice Dobie			
Early Years Manager	Karen Foster			
DfE Number	816/6008			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	£1000 - £15,300.			
Age range of pupils	3-14			
Gender of pupils	Male and female			
Total number on roll	full-time	112	part-time	103
Number of children under-5	Boys:	17	Girls:	19
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	92	Girls:	87
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	9	Girls:	7
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](http://www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk).**