



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Loughborough Amherst School

December 2021

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School's Details

School	Loughborough Amherst School		
DfE number	855/6008		
Early Years registration number	EY538259		
Registered charity number	1081765		
Address	Loughborough Amherst School Gray Street Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2DZ		
Telephone number	01509 236193		
Email address	amherst.office@lsf.org		
Headteacher	Dr Julian Murphy		
Proprietor	Loughborough School Foundation		
Age range	0 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	421		
	Day pupils	408	Boarders 13
	EYFS	112	Juniors 73
	Seniors	183	Sixth Form 53
Inspection dates	30 November to 3 December 2021		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Loughborough Amherst School, is an independent co-educational day school near the centre of Loughborough. The school was founded in 1850 by the Rosminian Sisters of Providence. In September 2015 it became the fourth school in the Loughborough Schools Foundation and is overseen by the Foundation's board of governors. Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher and senior leadership team, become fully co-educational and included provision for boarders in two boarding houses on the school site.
- 1.2 The school comprises a nursery for children aged 0 to 4 years; the junior school, for pupils aged 4 to 11 years, and the senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 18 years.
- 1.3 The school was inspected at the same time as the other schools in the Loughborough Schools Foundation.
- 1.4 During the period March to June 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers.
- 1.5 No boarders remained on site during March to August 2020.
- 1.6 During this period of closure the school provided online lessons and remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.7 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.8 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.9 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home. Overseas boarders that did not return home received remote learning at the home of their parents or guardians.
- 1.10 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.11 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.12 Founded on Catholic principles, the school aims to welcome and respect everyone for who they are and seeks to enable pupils to work together to become clever, kind and brave. It sets out to create one family, where everyone is known and loved, and whose members will go into the world and make it a better place. The aim is to help nurture young women and men who are confident but not arrogant, and ambitious but not materialistic.

About the pupils

- 1.13 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds. Most live within a 15-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is slightly above average in the junior and senior schools and slightly below average in the sixth form. The school has identified 132 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include dyslexia

and other conditions, several of who receive additional specialist support. Eleven pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 24 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified a number of pupils as being the most able in its population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are 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 FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. 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 standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; 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 standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2019 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2019 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.8 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.9 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.12 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, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.13 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.17 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes 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. It also includes 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.18 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.20 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.22 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.23 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 2.24 Leaders review the organisation of activities and routines in order to ensure the provision of effective learning experiences. Practitioners are training and are successful at intervening to support and extend children's learning when playing independently. They have successfully introduced activities and strategies to ensure quieter children enhance their language and communication skills.
- 2.25 The curriculum is structured coherently and is tailored to meet the needs and interests of the children. It supports the children's development in the prime areas of their learning well. The setting provides a high standard of care and staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of how children of this age learn. The progress children make in their learning and development relative to their starting points is good. There are robust systems in place to ensure the children are ready for the next stage of their education. The requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are fully met and there is a shared understanding of the responsibility for protecting children.
- 2.26 Children display high levels of emotional security and form strong and positive attachments with their key people. Their personal and emotional development is supported well. Children are secure and happy at nursery and willingly engage not only with familiar practitioners but also with visitors.

Quality of education

- 2.27 The quality of education is good.
- 2.28 A personalised curriculum effectively tailors the areas of learning to meet the needs of each individual child. It builds on what children know so that they develop the knowledge and skills required for future learning. The children benefit from opportunities for purposeful play in all areas of the curriculum and practitioners show good knowledge of how to support children including bilingual children and those with speech and language delay. However, the curriculum does not challenge the children to develop their skills and understanding as much as possible.
- 2.29 Practitioners are highly effective in their communication with the children and use language, songs and actions to communicate successfully with even the youngest children. All children are quick to join in with familiar songs, such as *The wheels on the bus*. Practitioners readily share books in a way that excites and engages the children. They successfully encourage the children to make links to their own lives, for example pointing at the images in the book and then pointing to their own clothes.
- 2.30 Practitioners make good use of the opportunities to introduce new vocabulary during play by narrating what the children are doing. Positive feedback is given to children through appropriate use of praise and encouragement, which helps them to acquire the skills and attitudes to learn effectively. Children are motivated and keen to have a go at new activities and solve problems, as seen by a toddler trying to move a ride-along toy up an incline in the garden.
- 2.31 Assessment procedures are effective and ensure the children's progress is being regularly monitored. Children make good progress and deepen their learning across the curriculum, but on occasions a lack of challenging opportunities for rich and varied experiences inside and outside prevents them from developing further. Practitioners maintain good communication with parents to inform them of their child's progress and how to support them at home with their learning.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 2.32 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.

- 2.33 Children show outstanding engagement in their learning. They are highly enthusiastic learners and are extremely keen to explore their surroundings. The youngest children confidently move around the room exploring and choosing activities such as the building blocks for themselves. Children are actively involved in group activities, such as listening to a story or participating in a singing session. All children demonstrate a highly positive attitude and are all willing to make an attempt at something, for example, to feed themselves during lunchtime. All children show excellent levels of concentration and perseverance, such as when actively exploring the challenge of placing hay in a heap on the table in the toddler room.
- 2.34 Children demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. The youngest children show delight by smiling and bouncing when playing 'peek-a-boo'.
- 2.35 The children's perseverance is developed and rewarded by the practitioners' excellent interactions. Their constant, gentle encouragement keeps the children focused and highly motivated. Children have the confidence to make their own decisions about their learning and will independently choose activities within the rooms. For example, a child in the baby room crawled to the painting table. The children's excellent behaviour and attitudes are demonstrated by their willingness to be part of a group, follow instructions and concentrate for extended periods, such as registration time.
- 2.36 The setting has a highly effective partnership with parents which successfully promotes children's attendance. Children arrive enthusiastically in the morning and happily leave their carer, showing they are emotionally secure. Children respond with enthusiasm to familiar routines, particularly around mealtimes.

Personal development

- 2.37 The personal development of children is good.
- 2.38 The planned curriculum is effective in promoting the children's development of their character. The practices of the practitioners ensure all children are emotionally secure and are happy and confident to express themselves freely. From a young age children gain a good understanding of what makes them unique.
- 2.39 The curriculum and care practices promote the children's confidence, resilience and independence. Practitioners use praise and encouragement effectively to encourage children to take risks in their play. They narrate what the children are doing and give them choices to help develop their understanding of risk, such as when helping toddlers decide if they wish to climb down or jump off the platform. Practitioners support children's physical health by encouraging them to take an active role when listening to music. Staff invite the children to join in movements to the music, which the youngest children do with enthusiasm.
- 2.40 A good range of healthy foods are available and all children are actively encouraged to try new options. Children sit exceptionally well during mealtimes, clearly enjoying the food and the social experience. They demonstrate excellent table manners for their age. Encouragement and praise from the practitioners develop the children's skills to eat independently.
- 2.41 The key person system is fully embedded in the setting and is a strength. It ensures that strong, secure attachments are formed which promote the children's well-being and independence. Practitioners teach the language of feelings, helping the children to develop their emotional literacy. Relationships between practitioners and children are warm, sensitive, stimulating and responsive.
- 2.42 The setting meets the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare, learning and development. Recent changes to oversight of the setting have ensured that policies and procedures are adhered to at all times.
- 2.43 Hygiene practices ensure that the personal needs of the children are met appropriately. Practitioners show high levels of care to ensure children are always clean and comfortable. They successfully

establish routines to teach the children to become increasingly independent in managing their personal needs, for example children ask to have their face wiped after snack time.

- 2.44 Practitioners are positive role models for the children and consistently reinforce good manners and politeness. Children are taught the importance of respect and being kind to one another. They are encouraged to share and help one another. For example picking up a glove for someone who has dropped it.
- 2.45 Staff promote children's awareness of fundamental British values through discussion and activities. Children develop an understanding and appreciation of diversity and differing needs within their community, such as making Diwali lights.

Leadership and management

- 2.46 Leadership and management are good.
- 2.47 Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear vision for providing high-quality inclusive care and education for all children. All practitioners are aware of this vision and work together to reach the common goal. Professional development is effective and as practitioners build their knowledge, it translates into improvements in teaching which has a positive impact on the children's outcomes. For example, always giving children choice in what they are doing, enables them to develop their critical thinking and language skills.
- 2.48 Managers act with integrity to ensure that all children are appropriately supported for their individual needs and have full access to their entitlement to early education. Leaders fulfil their statutory duties, for example, under the Equality Act 2010 and other duties and in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy and safer recruitment.
- 2.49 A large majority of parents are very positive about the nursery. Strengths they highlight are the relationships that the children have with practitioners and the level of care and support they are given. Children develop good levels of independence and feel happy and safe at nursery. Although a minority feel that they do not receive enough information or feedback, there is evidence that parents are communicated with regularly via several different formats. They receive information about the curriculum, feedback on their child and regular reports on progress. Some parents did express concerns over supervision of children within the rooms. This has been followed up and new procedures have been implemented to ensure that this is not an issue.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.50 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Ensure the curriculum and environment both inside and outdoors is developed so that it challenges the children and demands high expectations of learning.

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.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- Progress from a very broad range of starting points is good. Pupils with SEND achieve particularly well, due to effectively targeted support.
- Pupils make good progress in numeracy throughout the age range. They successfully apply these skills across other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils' critical thinking skills are less well developed due to inconsistent encouragement and opportunity to apply these in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, supportive and pro-active. They work well collaboratively and enjoy the opportunity to work with others.

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

- Pupils value community engagement and proactively support initiatives to support those in the local and wider communities.
- Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of the non-material aspects of life which permeates through their experience at school.
- Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. They are honest, have high levels of integrity and understand the need for a community to work within a set of rules.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Strengthen pupils' critical thinking skills by consistently encouraging and providing opportunities for these to be applied in lessons.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5 Pupils achieve good and sometimes excellent standards across the school from a very diverse range of starting points. This represents successful fulfilment of the school's aim to provide a challenging knowledge-rich curriculum that sets high expectations for all learners. Pupils' achievement is supported by leadership and management initiatives, which include the introduction of the new *Minerva* philosophy. This has been designed by senior leaders in the school to help young people prepare for a competitive world while remaining happy, healthy, balanced and kind. Pupils' subject

knowledge and skills, and their ability to apply these skills to other subjects, are good. Some can apply theoretical concepts to practical situations. For example, sixth form pupils designed a water purification device using simple techniques that could be used in third world countries as part of the Young Enterprise Scheme. Younger pupils demonstrated excellent knowledge of the reasons why the Spanish Armada failed and linked these to a range of complex factors. In the science detective club, pupils explore the pattern of blood spatters dependent upon whether it falls from height or different angles. Pupils' academic success is promoted by the teaching which is most effective when it stimulates interest and when opportunities are provided for pupils to have the opportunity to develop their own critical thinking skills to take their learning to the next level. On a number of occasions, pupils' progress was slower when the teaching was prescriptive and allowed little time for discussion or reflection. A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire responses agreed that teaching enabled their child to make good progress.

- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2017 to 2019. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above in relation to the national average for maintained schools. A-level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. In 2020–2021 at GCSE, 42% of pupils were awarded grades 9–7 and at A level 68% were awarded grades of A*–A. Judged by the lessons observed, work seen, and interviews with pupils, pupils of all abilities make good progress in the short term. The very large majority of pupils' questionnaire responses indicated that the school gives them opportunities to learn and make progress.
- 3.7 Pupils with SEND or EAL make similar and sometimes more rapid progress compared to other pupils as shown by their work and test and examination performance. This is because sensitively targeted and regular support in lessons is well managed, overseen and reviewed regularly. Pupils' progress is supported by a large group of well-trained staff who are quick to spot difficulties and provide solutions in a timely manner to narrow any gaps in learning and agree targets for the future. Boarders value the readily available support of their peers and adults during the evenings in the boarding houses and feel that this contributes positively to their academic progress. A further measure of progress is indicated by the higher education destinations of sixth form leavers who achieve success in gaining places at universities of their choice with a range of admission criteria.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills by the time they leave the school. At each stage they express their ideas well both verbally and in writing. The youngest EYFS children develop the vocabulary to explain how they are going to tackle activities such as when making a rainbow rocket or deciding how they would like their hair cut. Pupils in the prep school write confidently, such as when using a range of mature vocabulary while describing the progress of *'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'*. Older pupils demonstrate a mature and thoughtful approach as they discuss the symbolism behind the main characters use of the dance in Ibsen's *Tarantella*. Pupils speak confidently to a wide range of audiences. High levels of participation in music concerts and drama productions and opportunities for debate support the development of excellent speaking and listening skills. Students write persuasively in English. They write in detail about character and theme and are able to analyse the emotions of the main characters in a range of challenging texts. GCSE pupils write with great clarity and maturity about the impact of bereavement on the lives of the wider family unit.
- 3.9 Pupils of all abilities demonstrate good progress in mathematics. They develop core skills which they apply well to a range of subjects, including science, geography and computing. The youngest pupils in EYFS confidently build the tallest tower they can and count the blocks. They manipulate numbers to identify numbers one more or one less than the one they started with. Older pupils are able to interpret graphical information well and make sensible inferences on the effect of the baby boom from the post-WW2 era. Pupils apply their mental mathematics skills to information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning and progress their programming activities. Pupils' technological skills are used to develop multi-media work using presentation software to

demonstrate their research results or lead in school activities such as house meetings or year group events.

- 3.10 From an early stage, pupils develop good study skills. They demonstrate increasingly strong research skills and ably gather and analyse information from a range of sources. Younger pupils understand the importance of independent research when identifying suitable sources and working collaboratively to discover the reasons behind pollution and environmental changes and what can be done to halt the damage already done. Older pupils produce well organised and reflective projects as part of their Extended Project Qualification work. Pupils are beginning to develop important critical thinking skills through the school's ethos which encourages them to be diligent, identify when they are able to be confident, take leadership in their learning and show resilience. However, these skills are not yet fully embedded or applied across all subject areas.
- 3.11 Pupils enjoy high levels of success and develop their own interests and talents in extra-curricular and out of class activities. They take full advantage of opportunities for music, individual and team sports, journalism, cookery and many creative subjects. Skills for the performing arts develop rapidly from an early age as pupils take part in concerts throughout the year. The wide range of opportunities the pupils have to perform result in confident and capable performances at all levels. Younger children speak animatedly about their preparations for their nativity production of *'Whoops-a-Daisy Angel'* and their love of singing together in the chapel. Sixth form pupils take the lead in planning and organising productions involving the younger pupils as part of the *New Directors* season. Younger pupils in the prep school all learn to play the trumpet as part of their curriculum and Many older pupils play one or more instruments and are highly successful in music board examinations up to grade eight as well as achieving highly in local music festivals. Skills for artistic endeavour are extremely well developed. Pupils of all ages work with a wide range of materials and styles and achieve success in local and national competitions for art and textiles.
- 3.12 Sporting ability at a high level is evident as the pupils move up the school, resulting in a good range of success in local, regional and national competitions. Pupils of all ages develop their physical fitness and skills for particular sports due to effective specialist coaching. In recent times school teams have had significant success in national competitions for swimming and dance. Individual pupils have won national and international tennis competitions, two having achieved wild cards to enter the main draw at Junior Wimbledon. Other pupils play for professional football clubs in their youth teams.
- 3.13 Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are enthusiastic and very supportive of each other, including in the boarding community. Pupils learn how to work together to achieve common goals from an early age. EYFS children solve problems together during the outdoor learning sessions as they work together to build dens. Older pupils recently supported their learning on Ancient Egypt by working together successfully to design and build a 'shaduf' to raise water to irrigate the crops and test it in the stream. Pupils' positive attitudes are well developed by staff who provide challenge and support in equal measure and who willingly give of their time to provide help and encouragement. When given the opportunity, pupils take responsibility for their own learning and progress.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils are proud of their school and have an extremely well-developed level of maturity by the time they move on to education, training or employment. Leavers are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives and are confident to take on their future challenges. Pupils of all abilities and needs develop much self-confidence during their time in school. They have a strong understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and are accepting of both. Pupils of all ages are aware of the need for resilience. Younger pupils in EYFS demonstrate resilience as they tackle physical challenges in the playground and keep going when they fail. Older pupils demonstrate strong leadership skills and resilience as they tackle challenges through the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Duke of

Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) expeditions and activities. Leaders' and governors' establishment of a well-structured assembly programme, tutor system and comprehensive personal social and health education (PSHE) and RSE programmes, provide pupils with a highly effective framework which develops their knowledge of themselves and their place in the school and the wider world. Pupils are confident and eager to take on meaningful responsibilities within the school. Sixth form pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives through opportunities to mentor younger pupils, organise a range of house activities and the option to research, plan and organise charitable events in the school and wider community.

- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate a highly positive approach to their peers and adults alike. The inclusive atmosphere of the school and supportive boarding community helps them to identify their strengths. This enables them to understand the impact of their decisions on themselves and others. This was particularly evident in class and in the playground where pupils were seen providing active support for those who were finding things more difficult. Boarders feel that working together in the houses and learning to live together helps them to make positive decisions for themselves about their daily routines, their friendships and their work. Pupils recognise that choices have consequences and that careful planning and a consideration of different options can be helpful when tackling each new challenge.
- 3.17 Pupils are happy to articulate their thoughts on spirituality in its broadest sense in an open way. Pupils appreciate the chapel as a space for quiet reflection and the multi faith room as a place they can meet to discuss the many views held by their peers. Pupils organise and take an active role in weekly spiritual life sessions. Through these they demonstrate thoughtful responses to philosophical discussions and successfully debate a range of topics such as 'hope' and 'peace'. Pupils' spirituality was evident in the way that they show concern for the natural world through work in a group promoting ecological awareness, singing together in worship and discussing the impact of the music on their emotions. It was also demonstrated in the natural way that they show genuine concern and care for the feelings of others.
- 3.18 From an early age, pupils show a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils have an excellent understanding and respect for the school's behaviour guidelines. They understand why communities need rules and are able to adapt these to the wider community, thus recognising the need to respect the country's laws. As a result, behaviour in the school is extremely good. Pupils respect the school reward and sanction system, and many pupils acknowledge the importance of kindness and mutual respect and working closely with staff to ensure a happy and safe school environment. In debating club, pupils tackle some challenging topics such as whether humanity is inherently evil or whether the United States withdrawal of Afghanistan was appropriate. Older pupils recognise and appreciate the extra responsibility that comes with the greater freedom enjoyed by sixth formers. They felt that staff are approachable and are always responsive to requests to discuss issues that affect them, such as relationship issues, challenges with their work and peer pressure. In lessons pupils show a thoughtful understanding of moral dilemmas when discussing challenges facing society, such as climate change and the impact of war on communities around the world.
- 3.19 Across the age range pupils develop strong social skills. They value the broad range of opportunities to work together to achieve common goals and demonstrate responsible leadership. At all levels pupils show care and support for each other. For instance, the oldest pupils take responsibility for children in younger year groups, organising clubs, acting as excellent role models as part of the house system and ensuring they have someone to talk to if they have concerns. Boarders demonstrate easy relationships with each other and understand the importance of supporting each other in simple ways such as when taking part in activities at the weekends or when out on walks or at tournaments. The house system is an integral part of school life and provides many opportunities for pupils of all ages to get together such as when rehearsing for the house music competition. Pupils' strong personal development owes much to the encouragement and personal example set by staff and the well managed pastoral systems that identify and respond to pupils' wide range of individual needs and

circumstances and promotes their well-being. The underlying values and ethos, strongly promoted by the school leaders and governors are another key factor in the pupils' success.

- 3.20 Pupils of all ages relish taking on a wide range of responsibilities within the school. They enjoy collecting ideas to discuss at the school council. Here, they make an active contribution and decisions are taken which will benefit their school and the wider community. Discussions in this group of recent times, have resulted in improvements to the play areas, the introduction of mascots for each of the houses and the presence of a pet in the prep school. Contribution to the wider community is an integral part of school life. Pupils of all ages volunteer willingly and with great enthusiasm to participate in a wide range of community endeavours to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves such as providing food for children in the community during school holidays through *Grub Club*, providing food for homeless shelters and inviting care home residents to special events. The senior prefect team take an active role in supporting the younger children and work closely with the sixth form to ensure that pupils across the school are happy and supported. Pupils describe the school as an extension of their family life.
- 3.21 Pupils show high levels of respect for and tolerance of different faiths and cultures, actively enjoying sharing their own customs with each other. The school welcomes pupils from many different religions and cultural traditions and this supports a natural approach to integration and acceptance. Boarders enjoy getting to know young people from around the world and feel that they are developing life-long friendships and a strong awareness of the importance of acceptance and difference. Pupils develop an increasing awareness of world faiths as they mature, and regularly share festivals and food events with their peers from other faiths and backgrounds, such a recent celebration of Diwali in the school chapel. Pupils who are new to the school express how warmly they have been welcomed into their new community by their peers and the older pupils and feel that they are entirely understood and accepted for who they are which may have not previously been the case. Pupils also display a strong appreciation of their own culture through their art, music, drama and opportunities for celebration of their own traditions and festivals. They are extremely proud of their school. An overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that the school promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of others.
- 3.22 Pupils of all ages confirm that they have a strong understanding of what it means to stay safe physically, emotionally and when using technology to access the internet. Younger pupils learn how to make healthy choices in their diet, serve themselves and appreciate the healthy options available at mealtimes. Older pupils deepen their knowledge of how exercise changes their bodies and helps to keep them healthy. Leaders and teachers have created a safe learning environment where all pupils feel that it is normal to express concern or anxiety and that it is safe to be open about how they feel. Pupils with anxiety or mental health needs confirm that they feel they can be open about their experiences. This is because they are well supported by a team of staff including the school counsellor, the chaplain and the school matron who listen and are open and honest in their discussions. Pupils appreciate opportunities to be themselves and relax in an otherwise busy day for example through Pet Club where they work together to care for the school guinea pigs. Awareness is built upon in an age appropriate way which allows pupils to develop safe ways of using a range of technologies.

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 the foundation board and the chair of the school board of governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and year group meetings. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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 Diane Gardiner	Reporting inspector
Mr Ian Senior	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC and GSA school)
Mr Alex Smith	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS and HMC school)
Mrs Pamela Edmonds	Team inspector (Head, IAPS and ISA school)
Mr Tim Dewes	Team inspector for boarding (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Ann-Marie Elding	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Head of prep, SofH school)
Mrs Sally Donaldson	Team inspector for EYFS (Head of kindergarten, HMC school)