

# **Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Loughborough High School** 

December 2021

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# **School's Details**

School	Loughborough High School		
DfE number	855/6009		
Registered charity number	1081765		
Address	Loughborough High School Burton Walks Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2DU		
Telephone number	01509 212348		
Email address	high.office@lsf.org.uk		
Head	Dr Fiona Miles		
Proprietor	Loughborough Schools Foundation		
Age range	11 to 19		
Number of pupils on roll	521		
	Seniors 381 Sixth Form 140		
Inspection dates 30 November to 3 December 2021			

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# 1. Background Information

### About the school

1.1 Loughborough High School is an independent day school for female pupils. The school was established in 1850 and is one of four which make up the Loughborough Schools Foundation (LSF). It shares a campus with Loughborough Grammar School and Fairfield Preparatory School. The fourth LSF school, Amherst School, is situated nearby. The schools have a common governing body. The school comprises two sections: the senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years; and the sixth form, for pupils aged 16 to 19 years.

- 1.2 The current head was appointed in April 2019, and a new sports centre was built in the same year.
- 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 August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers and vulnerable children. During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.

### What the school seeks to do

1.9 The school's aim is to encourage initiative, independent thought and enquiry in a positive, enjoyable learning environment built on mutual trust, respect and openness. The intention is that every student can achieve and become the young person they want to be.

### About the pupils

1.10 Pupils come from the local area and from Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Rutland. Most come from professional and business families. Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of pupils is well above average. The school has identified 67 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia and other conditions, of whom 35 receive additional specialist support. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Four pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) and their needs are supported by their classroom teachers.

# 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. 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. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> Regulations 2014, <u>National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools</u>, <u>Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory</u> 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 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

# PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2018 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2018 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive 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.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

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

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

### PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

#### PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

#### PART 6 – Provision of information

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

## PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.
- 2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

### PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

# 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

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 excellent.
  - Pupils' communication skills, in particular their ability to articulate opinions and listen respectfully, are excellent.
  - Pupils make extremely skilful use of applications and devices to enhance their learning at school and home.
  - Pupils achieve much success across a wide range of regional and national academic, sporting, art, drama, music and other activities.
  - Pupils show extremely positive attitudes towards learning and outstanding collaborative skills.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
  - Pupils are sensitive to each other and respect and value diversity within school and society as a whole.
  - Pupils' notably strong levels of self-knowledge and self-discipline underpin a resilient approach to their personal development.
  - Pupils collaborate continuously and successfully contribute to each other's social development.

#### Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:
  - Strengthen pupils' progress even further by providing more consistently focused guidance about ways in which they can improve their work consistently across the range of subjects.

### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve consistently excellent results in public examinations. In the years 2018 to 2019, examinations results at GCSE and A level have been significantly above national averages. In the years 2018 to 2019, 80% or more of all GCSE entries were awarded grades 9 to 7 and in 2018, 43% of entries were awarded a grade 9. In 2018 and 2019, pupils achieved 80% A\* to B grades at A level, including 50% A\* and A grades in 2018. In 2020 and 2021, 90% of GCSE entries were awarded grades 9 to 7 at GCSE. In 2020, 86% of A-level entries achieved A\* or A grades. The school's assessment data show that pupils make rapid progress. Leaders initiated a review of provision at GCSE and A level which has

- enabled pupils to focus on fewer examination subjects, creating space within the curriculum for pupils to pursue independent learning, thereby successfully meeting the school's aim for them to develop intellectually.
- 3.6 Pupils' academic achievement is promoted by teaching which, at its most effective, provides many opportunities for pupils to work independently and apply their skills actively. All pupils are regarded as highly able and the curriculum and co-curriculum is extended and enhanced to provide additional challenge. A very large majority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons. Pupils' achievement is supported by leaders' monitoring of the progress of different groups of pupils. This includes those with SEND and EAL to ensure that they make progress which is at least as rapid as other pupils. In the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils commented that they would like more focused guidance about ways in which they can improve their work consistently across subjects.
- 3.7 Almost all leavers gain a place at their first choice of institution, including universities with high admission criteria. Pupils display excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. They can rapidly recall prior learning and make valuable connections between topics and other subjects. In religious studies pupils offered the idea that Darwin's theory of evolution opens up dialogue and further evaluation of creation. Highly effective questioning in almost all lessons enables pupils to draw on their own knowledge to deepen their understanding. Well-planned lessons enable pupils to practise and apply a range of increasingly sophisticated skills. In drama lessons pupils devise and perform at an extremely high level and display detailed knowledge. Pupils are very confident when explaining new concepts and ideas, as seen in a Year 8 geography lesson on desertification. In modern foreign and classical languages lessons, pupils were able to evaluate rapidly and respond to demanding questions.
- 3.8 Communication in all its forms is a strength of the school. Pupils write fluently, crafting sophisticated arguments and exploring individual ideas. This was evident in work scrutiny, samples of extended project qualifications and success in external university-level essay competitions. Pupils speak confidently, express personal, well-formed opinions and listen most respectfully to the views of others, unafraid to participate and explore ideas because they feel safe to do so. Pupils in a sixth form psychology lesson expressed ideas on short-term memory using sophisticated terminology and reference to theoretical ideas. Pupils speak up and voice opinions about matters that are relevant to them, strongly encouraged by excellent relationships with teachers and the knowledge that others will listen. In a Year 8 English lesson, pupils demonstrated highly effective, focused listening skills and expressed increasingly sophisticated personal responses to the statement: 'Life is easier when you're not alone'. Pupils frequently contribute to the school's assembly programme, presenting complex ideas to each other. They develop an awareness of tone and register through a range of extracurricular activities that promote and enable them to hone their skills. Pupils achieve significant success in debating competitions and speech and drama examinations at all levels.
- 3.9 Numeracy is of a very high order. Pupils gain success in external mathematics challenges. The interest and aptitude of more able students is fostered through specific subject mentoring by teachers and older pupils. Those studying A-level subjects that require mathematical knowledge are given any additional support required to ensure they achieve success in applying relevant numerical skills. For example, a range of Year 13 work included high-level statistical testing, complex exercises for correlation and difference in biology, and accurate measures of central tendency as part of analysis in psychology. Pupils take opportunities to develop their numeracy outside the classroom, including successfully working out profit margins for charity sales and planning to manage on a budget as a student. Last year one-quarter of Year 12 pupils successfully completed an optional higher-level finance and banking qualification.
- 3.10 Pupils display highly developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The use of mobile devices is seamlessly embedded as a learning tool because of forward thinking investment by governors in resources and training in the application of technology. Pupils are extremely competent

users of a range of software and applications that support their learning across all subjects. For example, in physics, pupils devised a way to measure the speed of sound using video. In a Year 7 physical education (PE) lesson, pupils used devices to film and analyse movement in dance routines to improve performance in advance of an internal dance competition. In language lessons, pupils were highly effective in using ICT to test pre-learned knowledge, to set their own pace in listening exercises, and to practise modern foreign language skills. In a Year 12 drama lesson pupils effectively applied ICT skills to produce an atmospheric, immersive audio performance to share with their peers. Pupils appreciate the access they have to a wide range of resources on the school's learning platform which enables them to revise and revisit information. Their familiarity with and competency in using ICT to support learning was evident in the way pupils' knowledge and skills continued to develop at a high level during periods of remote learning, as seen in work uploaded to the learning platform. Pupils say they can use ICT effectively to collate, structure and organise their learning because they have been successfully taught how to use it as an effective research tool.

- 3.11 Study skills are extremely well-developed. Pupils can analyse and synthesise rapidly. High quality teaching supports and strongly encourages creativity and originality. Wider reading is widely fostered through teacher recommendation and pupils make apposite references to support their own points of view. This is because they are taught how to use and incorporate citations at an early stage, such as in a Year 10 lesson preparing for a higher project qualification. Sophisticated study skills were evident in extensive preparatory notes and the range of sources used to contribute to essays. Information is effectively synthesised in extended writing such as A-level history essays on Leninist Russia. Advanced research methods were evident in Year 12 and 13 extended projects ranging from the art of taxidermy to exploring degree level mathematics.
- 3.12 Pupils achieve significant success in regional and national competitions in a wide range of areas. They achieve strong results in subject specific challenges, language reading competitions, university essay competitions, biology and mathematics Olympiads, and computer and cyber challenges. Pupils succeed in obtaining scholarships, such as for entry to the armed forces or to an international film academy. In music and drama, many pupils have achieved grade 8 or diploma level in instrumental examinations and they enjoy participating and performing in foundation-wide ensembles. In the most recent LAMDA examinations, pupils achieved distinctions, including at bronze or silver medal level. Pupils progress through to county and regional competitions. Currently, more than 70 pupils play sport at county level and above. Pupils have achieved individual success in a national chess competition and creative writing. These achievements are fostered by the diverse range of opportunities available to pupils in the curricular and extra-curricular programmes, notably the varied pupil-led clubs and activities, and specialist mathematics coaching.
- 3.13 The pupils' attitude to learning is outstanding. They are confident in their abilities and secure in an atmosphere that values the exploration of independent ideas. In lessons pupils participate with much enthusiasm. They are curious and extremely keen to work together, for example sharing ideas of how to live in arid climates. Year 12 pupils worked together keenly to develop and appreciate wider perspectives of character presentation in an English lesson on Richard III. Collaboration between classmates and with older pupils is fostered by well-planned teaching and the well-established activities that are in place for older pupils to share their learning experience and subject knowledge.

# The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils have excellent self-understanding and a strong sense of self-discipline fostered by leaders' ongoing initiative to develop resilience. Pupils of all ages reflected openly about their strengths and weaknesses and were confident in talking about the value of learning by mistakes. Pupils who responded to the questionnaire and those who spoke to the inspectors said that they welcome all advice about how to improve their learning and performance. Pupils are keen to respond to any

specific targets and express satisfaction in knowing how their learning is developing. The pupils' highly developed personal skills are extended and supported by warm relationships with experienced staff who carefully monitor their welfare and encourage them to take academic risks and experience personal challenges. Pupils reflected a significant personal achievement was completion of the expedition for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, not because it was especially arduous, but because it was significantly outside their usual realm of experience. The pupils' lack of inhibitions in taking risks permeates many aspects of school life. Pupils willingly put forward answers in a Year 10 mathematics lesson exploring complex graphs. They rose to the challenge of designing their own science experiments, choosing appropriate equipment. Pupils are confident and willing to put themselves forward and be measured against their peers by attending open auditions for productions or taking part in hustings for form and school prefect roles.

- 3.16 Pupils consider decisions that determine their success and well-being with great care. Pupils who spoke to inspectors thoughtfully explained the processes they go through in evaluating and choosing options for life after the school. Pupils consider thoughtfully a wide range of subjects and career paths, including exploring opportunities to study overseas. They successfully research, plan and make these informed choices, supported by guidance from leaders, form teachers and heads of year. Year 13 pupils discussed with inspectors their wide range of higher education aspirations, confident they are making the best choices for themselves. Pupils propose ideas about individual charities they wish to support from which their year group make an informed selection.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate a very well-developed appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. For example, in response to a thought-provoking assembly, Year 7 pupils discussed and reflected in depth on the importance of possessions and what was truly valuable to them. Pupils develop high levels of empathy, fostered by the content of assemblies and seen in ongoing discussions in form periods. For example, in an English lesson, pupils considered the importance of friendship to combat loneliness, and drew on recent experiences in lockdown to identify what they have learned from them. Year 9 pupils discussed with inspectors their strong awareness of the importance of mindfulness and the benefits of meditation learned through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lessons. Several pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that meditation forms part of their daily routine. Pupil artwork, such as ceramic work celebrating pre-eminent women, conveys a strong sense of aesthetic appreciation. Pupils eagerly anticipate the annual *Tableaux*, a long-standing school tradition that encourages pupils to work closely together to perform spiritually uplifting music and drama.
- 3.18 An overwhelming majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that the school expects pupils to behave well. Standards of behaviour are extremely high, contributing to a distinctive calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong and accept responsibility for their own behaviour including towards others. They reflect upon reasons why rules are in place and consider the impact on others and potential consequences of any infringement. In extended projects pupils reflect on moral issues such as 'Is the death penalty in the USA justifiable?' They present ideas in short talks exploring themes like the true cost of war. Pupils say that they get along well with each other. Year 9 pupils describe a relationship of mutual trust with their peers and with all staff who model the respect and consideration that the school aims to achieve.
- 3.19 Strong social skills are evident in the classroom, the corridors, and the common rooms. Pupils are highly effective in working with each other towards shared goals. A very large majority of parents and pupils responding to the questionnaire agreed that the school provides a safe environment which successfully supports their child's personal development. Many clubs and activities are pupil-devised and pupil-led. Those with shared interests are encouraged to put their ideas forward and because pupils are passionate about making a difference or raising awareness, they draw others into participation. The recent initiatives arising from the pupil-led feminist society have been taken forward through strong support from the senior leadership team with whom they meet. A highly effective team of pupil leaders take their designated responsibilities very seriously, leading

- assemblies, organising events, and mentoring other pupils both socially and academically. Opportunities for leadership begin early and student-led presentations and assemblies inspire others or raise awareness of issues that are relevant to their peers.
- 3.20 Pupils make significant contributions to the lives of others in school and the local and wider community. They give of their time freely and make regular commitment to volunteering in local organisations. Pupils are actively involved in the range of charities they thoughtfully choose to support. During the pandemic, moved by the media portrayal of the impact of COVID-19 in south Asia, pupils raised funds and awareness of Indian culture to promote an alternative more positive view of the country. Some senior pupils use their talents to support the teaching and coaching of younger children in dance, sport and craft. Many pupils contribute to the academic mentoring of younger pupils. Pupils support local schools, residential communities and homes for the elderly, through the school's well-established voluntary service programme.
- 3.21 Pupils respect and value the diversity of their community. They show strong awareness of their own and other cultures, promoting understanding of their own and other cultures through food and festivals. Pupils understand the importance of celebrating difference and challenging discrimination and stereotypes. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors conveyed the view that there was a shared understanding that no one was more valuable than anyone else. Pupils describe the collective enjoyment in the annual shared celebration in music and dance of Diwali. Sixth form pupils spoke appreciatively of the contribution of recent alumni to the school's diversity and inclusion programme and articulated practical ways in which pupil leaders are actively promoting equality issues. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the democratic process by casting votes in leadership hustings.
- 3.22 Pupils display a clear appreciation of the importance of well-being. Well-being prefects promote activities and clubs through assemblies and a newsletter, sharing ideas and pointing to sources of advice and practical guidance. Year 7 pupils demonstrated very secure understanding of safe searching in an ICT lesson and know how to keep themselves safe when online. Pupils understand the importance of mental health as well as physical well-being. For example, pupils were actively involved in the recruitment for an in-house counselling service, a need identified and fully supported by governance and leadership. Comments in response to the pupil questionnaire show the depth of the pupils' awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils demonstrated understanding of the value of good nutrition. Pupils appreciate the quiet spaces in school and the opportunities to focus on mindfulness and well-being. Pupils show they have an excellent understanding of the importance of a balanced approach to life. Their choices of activities help ensure that exercise, healthy eating and good mental health are all maintained.

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

### **Inspectors**

Ms Sarah Williamson Reporting inspector

Mr Will Williams Compliance team inspector (Head, ISA school)

Mrs Sylvia Brett Team inspector (Principal, GSA school)

Mr Graham Letley Team inspector (Senior deputy head, HMC school)

Mrs Stephanie Piper Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)