



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report**

**Long Close School**

**February 2023**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Long Close School			
<b>DfE number</b>	871/6001			
<b>Address</b>	Long Close School Upton Court Road Slough Berkshire SL3 7LU			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 520095			
<b>Email address</b>	info@longcloseschool.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Kamaldeep Nijjar			
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Mr Simon Rudland			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cognita Schools Limited			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 16			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	229			
	<b>EYFS</b>	39	<b>Juniors</b>	96
	<b>Seniors</b>	94		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7 to 9 February 2023			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Long Close School is an independent coeducational day school. It was founded at the outbreak of the Second World War and moved to its current location in 1945. In 2004, the school became part of Cognita Schools, which is responsible for its governance. The senior school opened in 2006.
- 1.2 The school is divided into three sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which comprises Nursery, pre-school and reception; the prep School, for pupils in Years 1 to 6; and the Senior School, for pupils in Years 7 to 11.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 The school aims to inspire pupils by providing a holistic education in a nurturing family atmosphere in which every pupil can thrive and achieve. It seeks to enable every pupil to realise their potential academically and personally through a rich and broad curriculum in a safe and supportive school environment.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of the pupils is broadly average when compared to those taking the same tests nationally. Twenty-seven pupils required support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including dyslexia, attention deficit and hyperactive disorder. Two pupils have an educational, health and care plan. Eleven pupils have English as an additional language of which one receives additional support. The curriculum is modified for pupils that the school has identified as being the most able in its population.

## 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. 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 (EYFS) 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.** 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. 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: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant 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 2022, performance has 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 education in the prep 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.
- 2.6 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 good.

- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic and hardworking.
- Pupils are excellent communicators; they use wide-ranging vocabulary in their speaking and writing, read fluently and develop excellent listening skills from a very young age.
- Pupils have very strong information and communications technology (ICT) skills which they apply effectively to all areas of learning.
- Pupils' thinking and analytical skills are less well developed because opportunities for independent learning are limited.
- Senior school pupils do not make as much progress or acquire as deep a level of understanding in science as they do in other subjects.

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

- Pupils' social development and collaborative working skills are excellent.
- Pupils show an empathetic understanding of and respect for other cultures.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and understand the importance of physical and mental health.
- Pupils' spiritual understanding and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life are less well developed.
- Some pupils fail to live up to the school's behaviour values and do not consistently treat others with kindness.

#### Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to further develop their thinking and analytical skills by providing more opportunities for independent work.
- Ensure that pupils' progress and understanding in science in the senior school is commensurate with that in other subjects.
- Enable pupils to develop a deeper spiritual understanding and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.



- Ensure pupils' behaviour consistently meets the high standards expressed in the school's values.

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

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, pupils make good and often rapid progress over time and achieve highly across the range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities available to them. Pupils' progress is enhanced by the detailed and thorough tracking and monitoring systems that enable teachers to tailor teaching and tasks to individual needs. Thus, the school fulfils its aim to provide a challenging learning environment in which pupils develop their interests and talents. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make good progress in relation to their age and development, so that by the end of Reception, the majority are attaining well above national age-related expectations. Achievement in public examinations has been consistently good for the last three years. In 2019 just under half and in 2022 over half of GCSE examinations results were awarded grade 7 or better. Pupils with SEND and/or English as an Additional Language (EAL) make equally good progress, often outperforming expectations. They are aided in their learning by specialist support if needed, which provides pupils with specific guidance tailored to their needs. Good levels of pupil progress were seen in the vast majority of lessons and in a scrutiny of their work. However, governors have not ensured that pupils' progress and depth of understanding in senior school science, and in particular in chemistry and physics, is commensurate with that in other subjects.
- 3.6 Pupils are enthusiastic learners, with an excellent work ethic and desire to succeed. They are willing to learn new skills, and not afraid to take risks. Pupils told inspectors that making mistakes is part of the learning process. They feel supported in this by their teachers who use praise and encouragement to good effect. In the questionnaire almost all pupils said that teachers help them learn and are supportive. They are resilient and confident in the classroom, approaching every task willingly and with high degrees of motivation. For example, in a senior music lesson pupils were focused and engaged, showing genuine enthusiasm for the subject and clearly enjoying the lesson. They are reflective learners and gain much from analysing their work in order to improve the standard. Throughout the school pupils challenge each other's ideas in a constructive way whilst being supportive and respectful of each other's views. A scrutiny of work from pupils across the school showed that all work was neatly presented and kept in an orderly manner.
- 3.7 Pupils' communication skills throughout the school are excellent. They are confident and articulate speakers, and enjoy opportunities for public speaking, such as when delivering presentations in class. Pupils communicated fluently in a senior Spanish lesson, taking careful account of certain sounds and how combinations of letters such as a double l are correctly pronounced. Reading widely is highly valued throughout the school, and pupils are encouraged to write reviews of books and deliver their findings orally to their peers. They are fluent readers and enjoy reading aloud in lessons. Reception children's writing and speaking skills develop rapidly as they grow in confidence and maturity. In a phonics class, children soon mastered the sound and shape of the letter i and knew that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with full stop. Young prep school pupils learnt what a valediction was and could suggest appropriate examples that might be used at the end of a letter. Pupils write fluently in a range of registers and use literary devices in the correct way to tell a story and engender the reader's interest. For example, senior pupils wrote coherently argued essays on the concept of family honour in *Romeo and Juliet*, supported by deep knowledge of the play and suitable quotes. Pupils use technical language confidently and competently, such as when older pupils used the correct terminology in business studies when describing profitability.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages confidently use a wide range of ICT skills, as well as specific computing skills such as coding. In coding club senior pupils created a sophisticated computer game which they then enjoyed playing. This demonstrated the increasing range and complexity of skills which pupils develop as they move through the school. Pupils use their laptops frequently in many subjects for research or to write

essays and projects. For example, young prep school pupils confidently used a computer program to produce a digital representation of a Gurdwara, while others researched Viking gods before creating a presentation for their peers. Senior pupils used a design software programme adeptly to convert hand drawn set design into a 3D computer model which they successfully manipulate to produce a digital model of a set for a TV show. The governors have supported the development of ICT skills by providing each pupil with their own laptop.

- 3.9 Pupils develop good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning, including aesthetic and creative education. Pupils in the EYFS develop their fine motor skills through drawing and writing and during play, for example when trickling sand into containers. In almost all lessons, well-chosen, challenging tasks and probing questions, encourage pupils to think deeply about issues. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they value the detailed oral feedback provided by teachers. Most said that this support and encouragement helps them to become better learners and know how to improve in their work. Pupils show a good understanding of their previous learning and are encouraged to apply this knowledge to new situations. In a prep school practical science lesson pupils built upon previous knowledge to deepen their understanding of how changes to the natural environment impacted on the local animal and plant life, such as by stopping growth under a paving slab. Senior art students demonstrated a very good understanding of techniques such as camera height and point of focus when completing an analysis of the photographer Jock MacFayden. School leaders contribute to the success of the pupils by creating an ethos which supports and encourages pupils and staff in the pursuit of academic success. In the questionnaire, most parents and almost all pupils agreed that their skills and knowledge improve in lessons and that their teachers help them learn.
- 3.10 Pupils are confident and able mathematicians, successfully using their excellent calculation skills both in mathematics and across the curriculum. Reception children showed a good understanding of number when counting to 20 confidently, recognising written numbers and identifying number bonds to 10. Within the prep school, young pupils quickly learnt to create numbers from units of tens and ones, whilst older pupils became increasingly confident in multiplying and dividing by ten by moving the decimal point. Senior school pupils successfully performed mental divisions of decimals, moving decimal places correctly using different methods as appropriate. In a GCSE class, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of inverse proportions and exponential function and could accurately draw graphs to plot these. More able mathematicians compete successfully in national mathematical competitions. Pupils are comfortable using their skills across a wide range of other subjects, such as when calculating annual rates of return in business studies.
- 3.11 The acquisition of study skills, the ability to hypothesise, analyse and synthesise data is variable within the school. There are some examples of independent work, for example in the EYFS, children learn through exploration and trial and error as seen when young children were building an aeroplane out of wooden blocks. Prep pupils were able to analyse *The Lady of Shallot* very effectively. Senior pupils gained a clearer understanding of Shakespearean language and the intricacies of the plot development in *Macbeth* by using 2-step annotation to analyse words and phrases, explaining their meanings and uses in the context of the play. In a GCSE Religious Studies (RS) lesson, pupils produced an excellent study of Islam, including a detailed description of Hajj and the five pillars. Other work included excellent essays on whether war can ever be justified, supported with quotes from the Quran. However, opportunities for independent learning are not routinely available and thus pupils' analytical and thinking skills are not as well developed as they could be.
- 3.12 Pupils are successful in a range of creative and physical pursuits and are supported in their achievements by the wide extra-curricular programme, and specialist sports coaching. Teachers' encouragement empowers this achievement through enrichment activities which challenge pupils to develop skills beyond the classroom. Pupils are successful in individual external music examinations, and many achieve considerable success in speech and drama examinations. School teams of all ages successfully take part in a variety of local and national competitions, and talented pupils represent

county teams in a range of sports, notably cricket. Pupils have also achieved highly in national mathematics and art competitions, and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.14 Pupils' social awareness is excellent, and this helps to create an extremely harmonious and happy community. Children in the EYFS were observed socialising happily together, working well with others in lessons and sharing toys at break times. Pupils collaborate well in every aspect of school life, both in lessons and elsewhere. For example, in a junior music lesson pupils collaborated very effectively to produce a clapped rhythm that was clear and crisp, taking care to observe rests. Mutual support between pupils is a strong feature of the school and was seen in nearly every lesson. For example, in a maths lesson young pupils worked together to produce a 'knowledge organiser' to assist them in working logically through multiplication and division tasks. In a senior English lesson, pupils studying *Oliver Twist* produced joint revision notes for the benefit of the entire class. At playtime older pupils interact well with younger ones, ensuring that they play together kindly and that all are included. Older prep school pupils regularly listen to younger pupils read and gently encourage them when they encounter unfamiliar or tricky words. Pupils acquire excellent social skills through the many opportunities the school provides to engage with others in joint ventures, such as in raising money for charities. In discussions, pupils spoke of a caring, supportive and happy community in which they show real, genuine concern for each other. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team working and social skills they need in later life.
- 3.15 Pupils show excellent levels of respect for the diversity and differing cultures within the school. Pupils say they greatly enjoy learning about other cultures and faiths, especially when hearing from their peers about their lives. They enjoy and value the fact that the school celebrates the festivals of each religion and encourages pupils to attend in their cultural clothes on these days. Pupils work and play together harmoniously. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school encourages an atmosphere of respect and tolerance. Pupils showed an excellent understanding of what diversity, inclusion, and empathy mean in practice. They understand that another person's appearance, personality, beliefs, and interests bring something special to the world. The governors have encouraged this via their support for the school ethos which expects tolerance and kindness to all.
- 3.16 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and stay safe. In questionnaire responses, a very large majority of parents and pupils agreed that the school encourages them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are aided in making healthy eating choices by the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables at mealtimes. The youngest children understand the importance of washing hands and eating a balanced diet. Pre-school children brush their teeth after snacks and meals, accompanied by a song which enhances their enjoyment of this routine. Pupils understand how to stay safe online, something which is regularly reinforced by the school. For example, on internet safety day pupils discussed maturely the impact of online influencers and so increased their understanding of both the good and the potential harm such people can cause. Pupils learn how to stay physically safe too and are aided in this by regular visits from the emergency services who advise pupils on such subjects as fire and water safety. Pupils learn about mental health and are supported in this by the pastoral care system and the emphasis which the school places upon pupil well-being. Pupils appreciate the importance of physical fitness and benefit from both the formal sports programme and informal activities. In discussion, all could name several people they could talk to should they have any worries or concerns.
- 3.17 Pupils' self-understanding is excellent, confirming the school's success in meeting its aim to provide an environment that enables pupils to flourish and grow in self-confidence. They are aided in this by the positive support they receive from teachers and the whole school community. Pupils of all ages

are aware of where they are in their learning. They are helped in this by constructive marking and helpful oral feedback from their teachers. The 'mastery, embedded, and emerging' grading system used by the school gives staff, pupils and parents clear insight into the level pupils are at as well as providing targets for improvement. Peer assessment is used in most lessons and pupils say that critiquing the work of others helps them understand how they can improve their own work. Resilience is one of the school's core values, and pupils develop this from an early age, learning to persevere even when initially finding tasks challenging. For example, younger prep school pupils showed determination when converting decimals into fractions while senior maths students demonstrated great perseverance when calculating unit ratios for the first time.

- 3.18 Pupils are generally self-disciplined, and their personal development is usually characterised by excellent standards of behaviour. In discussions, pupils reported that there was virtually no bullying, and that when relationship issues arise between pupils, the school's effective pastoral care systems help them to find a resolution. The development of their moral values begins in the EYFS where children learn to understand school and class rules, share, take turns and be polite to staff and each other. Pupils develop strong relationships, derived from the ethos of the school which is based on respect, and kindness. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils are very attentive during assembly, listening carefully and quietly to the presentation from the teacher. However, poor behaviour in a very small number of lessons had a negative impact upon pupils' learning. A very large majority parents and pupils agreed that the school actively promotes and expects good behaviour. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. However, a minority of pupils felt that they were not always kind to each other. In discussions some female pupils felt that they received unwelcome comments from male pupils, something the school governors also identified in a recently conducted audit of safeguarding. Whilst the school is addressing this issue it has not yet been completely resolved.
- 3.19 Pupils develop a good understanding of the world's major religions through an effective RS programme. While they learn about the concept of faith, their appreciation focuses upon mutual respect rather than any deeper spiritual understanding or appreciation of non-material aspects of life. Consequently, in discussion pupils were unsure about these concepts, even when encouraged and directed by inspectors. Younger pupils enjoy their lessons in the nearby woodland learning environment which increases their appreciation of nature through a range of activities including studying wildlife. Pupils are occasionally encouraged to think about non-material things, and this was evidenced in a post lunch registration period when young pupils, as they answered the register, were asked to name things for which they were thankful. Senior pupils produced thought-provoking art pieces for their exam, including representations of tanks and mushroom clouds to link to the Ukraine conflict and the effects the war is having on people. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of the non-material and exposure to music, artistic or cultural experiences is limited.
- 3.20 Pupils practise and develop their decision-making skills from an early age. Children in the EYFS confidently select which activity they will do in lessons and which toys to play with at breaktime. Pupils of all ages select their food options at lunch and choose which clubs and activities to join. They practice their decision-making skills in a number of ways. For example, in a prep school geography lesson examining ways of reducing environmental impact, pupils chose which one of three hypotheses to investigate. Pupils can decide whether to apply for ambassador roles and whether to put themselves forward for a position on the school council. Senior pupils select their GCSE options after careful consideration and listening to advice. Over time pupils become skilled at making choices and are increasingly aware of the consequences of their decisions.
- 3.21 Pupils make a positive and tangible contribution to the school community through roles such as prefects and playground, reading or digital ambassadors. The active school council is an effective pupil voice which puts forward ideas for improvements to the school community, such as changes to the school food. Pupils learn to represent the views of their peers and to strive for improvements which

are for the benefit of all and not just themselves. Pupils show a mature understanding of how they can help those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds and providing practical support for a range of local, national and international charities. Harvest festival sees pupils bring food in for a local charity. Those at the top end of school are good role models, serving as examples that younger pupils can aspire to, notably promoted by the vertical tutor group system.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr William Ibbetson-Price	Reporting inspector
Mrs Elizabeth Andrews	Compliance team inspector (Former head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mr Garry Binks	Team inspector (Former head of department, HMC school)
Mr Stephen Yeo	Team inspector (Former head, HMC school)