



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WORTH SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Worth School

Full Name of School	Worth School		
DfE Number	938/6208		
Registered Charity Number	1093914		
Address	Worth School Paddockhurst Road Turners Hill Crawley West Sussex RH10 4SD		
Telephone Number	01342 710200		
Fax Number	01342 710230		
Email Address	school@worth.org.uk		
Head	Mr Gino Carminati		
Proprietor	Worth Abbey		
President of Governors	Abbot Kevin Taggart		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Alda Andreotti		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	564		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (445 boys; 119 girls)		
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 244	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	0
Number of Boarders	Total: 320		
	Full: 320	Weekly:	0
Inspection dates	29 Nov 2011 to 30 Nov 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in September 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in January 2011 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Worth School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils between the ages of eleven and eighteen, located on a 500-acre estate in West Sussex, alongside Worth Abbey. It was founded in 1933, at the same time as the community, by monks who moved from the abbey at Downside. It was established as a preparatory school for boys, admitting senior boys in 1959 and sixth-form girls in 2008. Younger girls were first admitted in 2010 and the school will become fully co-educational in September 2012. Since the previous inspection the school has built new boarding and day houses for girls, a social centre for all pupils, two new laboratories, and a new all-weather sports pitch and has refurbished large sections of the school.
- 1.2 The governing body has full responsibility for the governance of Worth School and the oversight of all its operations, including its day-to-day running and finances. The governing body is made up of lay and monastic members all of whom are appointed by the board. The abbot of Worth Abbey is ex-officio president of the board. The school occupies buildings owned by Worth Abbey, which undertakes capital developments when requested by the school. Monastic consent is obtained for any major strategic changes identified by the school's governors.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a broad education and balanced lifestyle, rooted in the Benedictine tradition, which both values individuals and fosters the community life of learning, worship, friendship and service. It also aims to provide a supportive environment, where every pupil is encouraged to realise their full potential.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 564 pupils aged between eleven and eighteen in the school (445 boys and 119 girls), of whom 320 were boarders. Pupils come from a broad range of social backgrounds. The majority of pupils are British and a significant minority of boarders come from families for whom English is an additional language (EAL). While the school gives priority to those from a Catholic background, it also welcomes those of other Christian and non-Christian faiths.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Results of standardised tests indicate that in Years 7 to 11 most pupils are above or far above average ability. In the sixth form the range of ability is wider, with a larger proportion of pupils having ability in line with the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs and 156 have been identified as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievements, their learning, attitudes and basic skills are all excellent. The school is successful in meeting its aim of encouraging pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils are articulate, write well and have a good grasp of mathematical and scientific concepts and their application. Information, communication, technological, physical and artistic skills are well developed. Standards of achievement in music, drama and sport are high, with pupils participating up to national level. Pupils also compete successfully in areas such as the Olympiads, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and Young Enterprise. Almost all pupils go on to university, a high proportion of them to their first choice university.
- 2.2 Results at GCSE over the last three years for which comparative data is available have been above the national average for boys' maintained schools and similar to the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE have been above the international norms and similar to the UK norms where the benchmark is higher. Boys' performance in A-level examinations has been good when compared with the national average for boys in maintained schools. The first cohort of girls sat A levels in 2010 when their results were above the average for girls in girls selective schools. Performance in the International Baccalaureate (IB) has been above the world averages and similar to the UK average. The performance of all sixth-form leavers in 2011 was particularly good. These results, interpreted in the light of inspection evidence of good teaching, together with pupils' exemplary attitude to learning, indicate that they make good progress at all stages when compared with others of similar ability.
- 2.3 Teaching in the lessons observed was well planned, showed a good understanding of pupils' prior achievements and, in most cases, encouraged pupils' active involvement. Marking is thorough and detailed and constructive comments are widely used. A comprehensive and well-used tracking system ensures that each pupil's progress is closely monitored.
- 2.4 The curriculum in Years 7 to 11, and also in the sixth form, where pupils choose to take either the IB or A level, is broad and balanced. Specialist provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent enabling them to make progress in line with pupils of similar ability. All pupils follow a carefully structured personal, social and moral education (PSME) programme. The taught curriculum is greatly enriched by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities together with an academic enrichment programme. These opportunities are received enthusiastically by pupils. In response to the questionnaire, and in interview, some pupils expressed a concern, shared by inspectors, about pupils achieving a balance between their curricular and extra-curricular commitments. Pupils of all ages are eager to learn. They take pride in their work and participate fully in lessons and activities, showing a willingness to express their own ideas and listen to those of others. By the time they reach the sixth form, pupils have developed a capacity to work independently.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.5 The personal development of the pupils is outstanding.
- 2.6 The influence of the Benedictine tradition and ethos is evident in every area of school life and shines through the daily lives of the pupils. They are reflective and open and treat each other and every one they meet with conspicuous kindness and consideration. They attach great value to the community and to their membership of it, speaking with feeling about the role of the chaplaincy and the services in the abbey with the monastic community. They have a highly developed sense of right and wrong together with a mature understanding of the importance of self-discipline.
- 2.7 Pupils show genuine concern for those less well off than themselves, giving both their time and their money in support of causes locally and abroad. While much of the school's charity work is house or chaplaincy based, many events are pupil-initiated, such as a Mont Blanc climb and a sponsored silence in support of human rights in Afghanistan. Pupils' understanding of the wider world is greatly enhanced by foreign exchanges and sports tours and through the school's longstanding links with Chile, which include an annual visit by Chilean members of the Manquehue-Apostolic Movement who participate in chaplaincy work.
- 2.8 Pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral care, focused closely on the needs and welfare of the individual. Pastoral care systems and procedures, based in the houses, are well developed and most effective. The easy accessibility of house staff and chaplains, together with the effective mentoring system for pupils, ensures that there is always someone for pupils to talk to if the need arises. The counsellor provides valuable support for pupils with more serious difficulties. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, supportive and relaxed. Boarders, both UK and overseas, and day pupils say that they feel safe and valued and that expectations about behaviour are clear. In response to the questionnaire some pupils, mainly boys, expressed concern that not all pupils are treated equally and that pupils views are not listened to. Inspectors found no evidence of unfairness and felt that the school provided good opportunities for the pupils' voices to be heard.
- 2.9 Anti-bullying and safeguarding arrangements are comprehensive. Pupils do not perceive bullying to be a problem and say that when instances do occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. A wide-ranging and ongoing safeguarding programme ensures that all staff receive necessary training and that matters that arise are dealt with appropriately.
- 2.10 Health and safety and fire safety arrangements are comprehensive and well documented. Risk assessments are carried out where necessary. Towards the end of the inspection visit, there was a road traffic accident outside the school involving a pupil that is currently the subject of a police investigation. First-aid policies and practices are excellent, with very good provision for pupils who are taken ill. The school maintains suitable admission and attendance registers. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and they appreciate the good quality and varied meals on offer both in the Pitstop and the refectory.
- 2.11 Boarders of all ages speak warmly of their experience, feeling safe and well cared for. They especially value the support of adults in the houses, the social environment and the friendship of their peers.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.12 Governance is very effective in ensuring that the school meets its aims. The governing body has mechanisms in place to provide excellent oversight of the work of the school and to draw up and monitor key policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 2.13 Governors have a wide knowledge of the school and take an active interest in all areas of its work through attendance at school events and also from presentations by senior staff and heads of department. They undertake an annual review of examination results and monitor closely educational standards. Careful financial planning and the strong support of Worth Abbey, which owns the school campus, ensure that high-quality buildings and facilities, such as the new all-weather pitch, effectively support all areas of school life.
- 2.14 The excellent relationships between the headmaster, other senior staff and the chair of the governors, forged through regular and open discussion, ensure that any issues that arise can be addressed quickly. Strong leadership is supported by excellent management and lines of communication. The senior leadership team, very well supported by middle management, is generating a clear vision for the future development of the school as it moves into full co-education. Policies and procedures, reviewed annually, support the school's work, contributing effectively to pupils' good levels of achievement and excellent personal development. All the required checks to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children are undertaken and recorded in a central register. Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters that are overseen by senior colleagues.
- 2.15 In pre-inspection questionnaires, parents expressed great satisfaction with the attitudes and views promoted by the school, the quality of education provided and the pastoral care of their children. They receive regular information about their children's achievement and progress in comprehensive written reports, grade cards and a range of meetings with staff. Publications include newsletters and booklets, and together with an easily accessible website ensure that parents are kept well informed about school systems, procedures and activities. The school has suitable arrangements for handling complaints.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that the timetabling of the school day allows all pupils to achieve a good balance between their curricular and extra-curricular activities.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior 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 registration sessions and house assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Miss Jane Hamilton

Reporting Inspector

Mr Bill Burn

Deputy Head, HMC school