



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Badminton School

October 2022

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School's Details

School	Badminton School			
DfE number	801/6003			
Registered charity number	311738			
Address	Badminton School Westbury Road Westbury on Trym Bristol BS9 3BA			
Telephone number	0117 905 5200			
Email address	schooloffice@badmintonschool.co.uk			
Acting head	Mr Stuart Dalley			
Chair of governors	Mr Justin Lewis			
Age range	11 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	431			
	Day pupils	259	Boarders	172
	Seniors	316	Sixth Form	115
Inspection dates	11 to 13 October 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Badminton School is an independent day and boarding school for female pupils. It was founded in 1858 and moved to its present site in 1924. The school shares the site with the linked junior school, which was inspected separately at the same time. A single board of governors oversees both the senior and junior schools.
- 1.2 The school comprises two sections: senior and sixth form. There are three boarding houses, catering for different age-ranges.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, a sports centre has been built and other refurbishment work undertaken. The school has extended its age range to cater for pupils aged 19 years.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide an education which nurtures intellectual curiosity, balancing academic excellence with fulfilment of individual potential in extra-curricular activities. It seeks to provide pastoral care which teaches respect and tolerance and requires each pupil to take responsibility for themselves and others. The school endeavours to enable pupils to leave the school as curious, confident and courteous individuals who will thrive in a competitive, global society.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Day pupils come from the surrounding area of Bristol. Around a third of pupils are boarders, with many from an international background. On entry, pupils' ability is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 97 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), primarily dyslexia and linked needs, 41 of whom have additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 80 pupils, of whom 50 receive additional support for their English. The school has identified 45 pupils as being the most able in the school's 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. 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. 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](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

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 2022 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 senior school, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 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. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships and sex education, 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.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.6 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. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.7 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 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, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 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. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.14 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4, 7 and 23 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.16 **The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.18 **The standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.20 **The standards relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are 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'.

Key findings

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

- Pupils achieve a high standard of results, reflecting their progress through the years.
- Pupils demonstrate great flexibility in their use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils participate wholeheartedly in the extra-curricular life of the school and achieve success in a range of activities.
- Pupils in the sixth form display effective skills of communication, both orally and in their written work.
- Younger pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding is sometimes limited.

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

- Pupils grow in self-confidence as individuals, understanding fully how to make the most of their potential.
- Pupils fully embrace the diversity of the school and celebrate each other's differences.
- Pupils are effective decision-makers.
- Pupils display a good sense of right and wrong and create a positive environment in which to learn.
- Pupils do not always show a strong awareness of the outside world.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Strengthen the depth of younger pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Strengthen pupils' appreciation and awareness of the outside world.

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 at the school achieve a high standard of results, exceeding the predictions from standardised assessments at every level. At A-level during the years 2017 to 2019, over half of the grades awarded were at A and A*. At GCSE in the same period, over two-thirds of grades awarded were at 9 to 7. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve grades in line with expectations and boarders achieve above expectations.

The results from centre-assessed and teacher-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021 reflect the same strong academic performance, and the results from 2022, though not yet ratified officially, indicate the same level of achievement. These results are particularly strong given the overall ability profile of the pupils. Almost all of Year 13 leavers go onto university with a large majority going to their first-choice destinations, including some of the most competitive institutions. These results reflect the pupils' positive efforts and the commitment of the teaching.

- 3.6 Pupils overall show a good knowledge of their work. They have developed the skills to improve their understanding of their subjects, but their use of these can be variable. In the sixth form the depth of pupils' knowledge and understanding is excellent, but this was less true in the younger years. This often related to a limited level of challenge provided in the lessons where the delivery of information was the main objective. In lessons where there was greater opportunity for open-ended thinking, pupils made strong progress with their learning. This was seen in a sixth form English lesson where pupils displayed a strong knowledge of the poems they were studying and could apply this effectively in their coursework piece. The same level of achievement was also seen in a food and nutrition lesson in Year 9, where pupils had a clear understanding of food hygiene rules. Pupils develop their level of understanding, helped by teaching that shows a clear knowledge of the pupils' individual needs. A majority of parents in the questionnaires spoke warmly of the support and learning culture in the school. Similarly learning and working hard are regarded highly by the pupils and consequently, they aspire to do their best.
- 3.7 Pupils communicate effectively with their peers and adults alike. Older pupils are generally confident in contributing to discussions in lessons and are willing to voice their ideas without fear of being wrong. Their written work is strong, articulate in expression and well-presented. Pupils are supported by teaching, especially in the sixth form, which encourages them to think and talk their ideas through fully. They have a good grasp of subject terminology and use it appropriately. Younger pupils display limited skills when communicating in a group discussion. They do not always listen carefully to each other. At times, they lacked the confidence and ability to develop their ideas fully in class, partly due to the type of questioning used. In the sixth form there is typically a much stronger level of verbal interaction, as seen both in a vibrant debate on the mid Tudor crisis and in a discussion of Vichy France and its impact on society, fluently conducted by the pupils in French throughout.
- 3.8 Pupils have highly developed ICT skills which they apply effectively to many areas of their learning. Pupils' development of these skills results from leaders' and governors' support and provision in this area and the way teachers make adept use of ICT as an integral part of their lessons. Pupils are digitally literate and use their devices with ease. They can quickly move from one application to another to suit the subject or the task at hand, from taking notes in class to using specific pieces of software. Some work of high quality was seen across the year-groups in a variety of subjects, from science to art. Musicians in the sixth form were confidently using the software to create harmonies based around set chords. The school's decision to introduce 'bring your own device' as a learning tool has raised pupils' engagement with ICT. From Year 7, pupils learn the essential skills for using ICT through their curriculum lessons, which they apply further as they move through the school.
- 3.9 Pupils are actively engaged in the co-curricular opportunities at school and their participation is excellent across all the different areas of activity. Pupils' responses to the questionnaire were full of praise for the range of opportunities available to them. Pupils enjoy success in LAMDA and ABRSM examinations up to and including at the highest levels. There are individuals performing in a national choir, as well as the excellent level of performance from the school's various ensembles, seen in rehearsal and in recordings of previous concerts. Pupils take part in a wide range of dramatic productions and perform both in local and national venues including participating in the Edinburgh Fringe festival. Pupils participate keenly in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) and achieve awards at all three levels. Pupils enjoy success at national challenge competitions in mathematics and science. Pupils gain distinctions in the English Speaking Board examinations. There are currently two teams involved in the finals of a major national enterprise competition. Pupils are encouraged in their

co-curricular activities through the provision of resources and impetus from both governors and school leaders. They also develop their skills in these activities as a result of the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers.

- 3.10 Pupils at the school are clearly numerate, as demonstrated in their mathematics lessons. It is a popular subject in the sixth form, and a number of sixth form pupils not studying STEM subjects still choose to study AS mathematics in order to maintain their good level of numeracy. Pupils can manipulate numbers in a variety of different contexts both in the classroom and beyond, reflecting a whole school commitment to this area. There was some strong evidence of numerical skills of a high order, seen in mathematics, economics and business studies lessons in the sixth form, with pupils able to display their knowledge across these different subject areas. Pupils develop their good mathematical understanding from the time they start school, with different curriculum departments contributing to their progress by enabling pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge.
- 3.11 Pupils in the sixth form display excellent thinking skills, drawing upon a wide range of sources to develop their ability to analyse and hypothesise. For example, in an economics lesson pupils were able to analyse and evaluate some difficult concept of side supply policies. Such abilities were also seen in a history lesson, where pupils displayed some quite hyperbolic thinking as part of the debate and the follow-up discussion. They showed that they are able to think deeply and perceptively, to present conclusions which reflected all sides of the argument. This level of thinking was less apparent in lessons and books in the younger years. However, some work produced, especially in project work, was of very high quality, such as an essay on policies towards poverty in Hong Kong.
- 3.12 Pupils generally are very focused in their work and clearly want to make progress in their learning. Younger pupils are not always so expressively active in lessons, and this can limit the level of thinking they display in discussions. As pupils move into the sixth form there is the opportunity for greater self-directed learning and they take full advantage of this. In interview, pupils stated they feel that this is the stage of their educational development where they can really learn how to be independent. Pupils in sixth form lessons work independently and collaborate very effectively, but this was less apparent further down the school, where there were fewer opportunities to do so. However, the results in terms of external awards, such as the extended project qualifications (EPQs) and higher project qualifications (HPQs) indicate that pupils can apply themselves effectively and work towards a specific task, when given the opportunity.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.14 Pupils are confident individuals and deal with the demands of school life effectively. This is especially within the sixth form, where the international environment and the approach of the teaching and boarding staff encourage greater self-reliance and resilience. Pupils show an insightful understanding of themselves and have a keen sense of their strengths and weaknesses, giving them a strong self-esteem. For example, in a Year 8 personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lesson, pupils made very good points about how they value themselves and others saying 'You should be happy with yourself as you are'. Pupils' work in lessons and their written assignments give them a good understanding of how to improve their own learning and performance. Boarders benefit from a supportive environment that enables them to develop a better understanding of themselves and prepares them for life beyond Badminton.
- 3.15 Pupils understand fully the need to make decisions about their work and their involvement in school life and how these will help to guide their futures. Pupils from the youngest years upwards spoke about having to make decisions with regards to their learning, through tasks that required choices to be made. For example, in an English lesson, younger pupils thoughtfully choose the poem that most appealed to them and defined why this was the case. Older students spoke sensibly about using their time effectively, especially in study periods. Pupils in the school council think about how they operate

as a group, in order to make decisions efficiently. Boarders display a good awareness and understanding of how to make effective decisions across all facets of school life, socially, culturally, academically and pastorally. They communicate effectively with each other and their pastoral tutors to ensure that they make the best possible decisions, in areas such as choosing language options. Older pupils explained to the inspectors how they took responsibility for selecting their options and the next stages of their education, and how they appreciated the support from the school.

- 3.16 The pupils have a strong sense of diversity and cultural understanding and demonstrate excellent sensitivity and appreciation of those from backgrounds different to their own. Pupils fully embrace and celebrate diversity through specific events as well as in their everyday interactions with each other. For instance, pupils have created a diversity group to develop further pupils' attitudes and have organised events such as a cultural day where boarders presented about their own cultures. Pupils are encouraged to develop their inclusive attitudes by the support and direction of the school's leaders and teachers who promote the core ethos of the school successfully. Pupils' appreciation of the value of diversity is seen in the excellent way that the pupils talk about each other and how they interact with each other in formal and informal settings. Boarders say that they especially value and respect the diversity within the houses and in the wider school. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Inspection evidence support this view.
- 3.17 Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of sensible and positive behaviour, with the result that the school maintains a very ordered and calm environment. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and seek to control their own behaviour and expect others to do the same. They interact with each other in a kind and caring manner in the boarding houses, they respect their differences and are extremely inclusive and tolerant. The positive environment that has been created in the boarding house contributes significantly to this sense of moral understanding and responsibility. Pupils are able to relate their moral sensibilities to their work, as seen in some coursework pieces, where sixth form pupils made perceptive comments on the nature of relationships and love and how ideas about the morality of people's behaviour towards one another can change and have changed over time. Similarly, pupils in a psychology lesson discussed perceptively the ethics of those individuals involved in recent, national, environmental protests and how there would be different attitudes towards their actions.
- 3.18 Pupils take part in a range of activities requiring working together and achieving specific objectives. They do this successfully and gain new skills of leadership and collaboration, strengthening their own personal development. This is the result of a very positive and supportive environment in the houses and throughout the school. The boarding houses are highly collaborative communities and boarders cultivate a sense of togetherness, working effectively and appreciably with each other. They help each other to achieve their common goals. Through the systems of mentoring and buddying, older pupils advise and support younger ones, cementing a sense of unity. Pupils collaborate well with each other and are particularly good at understanding and listening to each other. This excellent social development is evident both in lessons and in the times when they work collaboratively beyond the classroom. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop this teamwork, through activities such as the DofE and in the musical and dramatic productions, as well as house events. This was apparent in a rehearsal of some young string players, where they worked effectively as an ensemble to produce a performance of a *Brandenburg concerto* by Bach.
- 3.19 Pupils lead and take part in a range of events to raise funds for charities of their own choosing. Many are involved in community support, through the DofE as well as other outreach projects. Pupils contribute to the school through the various positions afforded to them, such as peer mentors and committee leaders. There are also positions for the younger pupils such as reading champion and being part of the school council. Older pupils speak in assembly and at school events. The boarding houses involve pupils in working for each other and helping their experience of living together as a large family. Pupils are very appreciative of their houses and the relationships formed. There is a

strong outreach programme in science and in the school's involvement with the Bristol education partnership, as well as musicians going to perform in the local area. However, in interviews, pupils from different years, felt they had a limited awareness of the outside world and described themselves as being 'insular' in attitude.

- 3.20 Pupils sometimes show a good understanding of the wider issues of life and can think beyond the practical and tangible, as illustrated in their work in art and English. However, in interviews, pupils were less sure of such ideas and could not easily articulate what they believed. Pupils have a good awareness of environmental needs, and the eco- committee leads the way in promoting this area in school. Pupils' discussion of some poems brought out some very thoughtful ideas about the environment and how society is in danger of destroying itself by its own actions. They were clearly able to think beyond the practical, with strong views expressed about the way some people thought, such as 'We are destroying our planet and ourselves but it doesn't matter and we can't stop it so we'll end up just carrying on'. The art on display around the school reflects a deep appreciation of emotions, seen in some seascapes and in a collection of powerful portrait photographs expressing how faces can be masks for people's real feelings.
- 3.21 Pupils have a clear understanding of keeping safe when online and can explain fully the techniques they use to do so. They take full advantage of the physical activities on offer. Pupils know the key elements of a good diet, the importance of looking after their mental health. They understand how to lead healthy lives. In this they are guided by the school's provision for promoting healthy living. Sixth form pupils participate in games and have regular access to the gym. They also have access to a kitchen where they can prepare their own meals. The 'broadening horizons' programme in the sixth form also covers topics that promotes this area and helps develop pupils' understanding. Pupils themselves initiated mental wellbeing 'check-ins' with each other. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaires declared that they felt safe in school and appreciated the care provided to them. This is fully in keeping with a core school aim of providing pastoral care which requires each pupil to take responsibility for themselves and others. The school meets its aim to create opportunities for every pupil to make a contribution to the well-being of the school and engage in genuine mutual support.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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 Gareth Price	Reporting inspector
Mrs Karen Wilcock	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school)
Mr Matthew Judd	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Matthew Oakman	Team inspector for boarding (Senior master, HMC school)