



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory and Educational Quality Inspection Reports
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Beechwood School

November 2021

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School's Details

School	Beechwood School		
DfE number	886/6011		
Registered charity number	325104		
Address	Beechwood School 12 Pembury Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent TN2 3QD		
Telephone number	01892 532747		
Email address	bsh@beechwood.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Justin Foster-Gandey		
Proprietor	Alpha Schools Holdings Ltd		
Age range	3 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	290		
	Day pupils	257	Boarders 33
	EYFS	24	Prep 98
	Seniors	133	Sixth Form 35
Inspection dates	2 to 5 November 2021		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Beechwood School is a co-educational boarding and day school. The school was founded in 1915 as a Roman Catholic school for female pupils. The co-educational prep school was opened in the 1980s and the school became fully co-educational in 2008. Male pupils have been able to board since 2014. In January 2021, the school became owned and governed by Alpha Schools Holdings Ltd.
- 1.2 The school comprises: a pre-prep, for pupils aged 3 to 7 years, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); a prep for those aged 7 to 11 years; the senior section for pupils aged 11 to 16 years; and a sixth form. Pupils can board from the age of 11 and all are full boarders. Since the previous inspection in January 2018, four different heads have been in post. The current headmaster was appointed in September 2021. The school has recently undergone general refurbishment.
- 1.3 During the period March to July 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. No boarders remained on site. During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home, or with guardians in the case of overseas boarders.
- 1.7 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.8 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school welcomes pupils of all faiths and aims to equip them with the values, skills, and habits of mind that will help shape their future in a wider world. It seeks to foster spiritual and personal development and a sense of social responsibility; and to enable pupils to discover their strengths and talents in an environment that nurtures creativity, encourages flexibility and embraces independence of thought.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Most day pupils come from predominantly professional families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. Many boarders originate from the Far East, Europe and Africa. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 45 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia, dyspraxia and autistic spectrum disorder; all receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 35 pupils whose needs are supported. Data have identified 43 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. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. 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 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The 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.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2019 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2019 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a). In some A-level subjects the small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, but inspection evidence confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and a disability access plan is in place.
- 2.11 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.12 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not always pay sufficient regard to current statutory guidance. Recruitment procedures relating to obtaining references and checks against the children's barred list are not always completed before staff begin work at the school. When a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has been delayed a suitable risk assessment has

not always been completed. Staff files do not consistently contain the requisite employment information.

- 2.13 Health and safety requirements are met in some areas, but systems of oversight for health and safety matters are ineffective. The school has not ensured that windows and doors operate safely; that services are maintained appropriately; that access to unsafe areas is controlled effectively; or that the training needs of staff are met.
- 2.14 The school has undertaken a fire risk assessment, but this has not been carried out by a competent person who has the knowledge and experience to oversee fire safety securely. A number of fire safety issues require attention including accessible fire doors, fire signage and the maintenance of fire exits.
- 2.15 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy but this has not been implemented effectively with regards to fire safety.
- 2.16 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996] are met, but those in paragraphs 7, 8, 11, 12 and 16 and NMS 6, 7 and 11 are not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that appropriate checks of references and against the barred list are undertaken prior to staff starting work and that, when a DBS check is delayed, a suitable risk assessment is undertaken before work begins; and that staff files consistently contain the requisite employment information [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8(a) and (b); NMS 11, 14.1; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that the written health and safety policy is effectively implemented in relation to ensuring the safety of doors and windows and the regular servicing of gas boilers; controlling access to unsafe areas; and meeting the training needs of staff [paragraph 11; NMS 6.1 and 6.2 and, for the same reason, paragraph 8(b); EYFS 3.55].

Action point 3

The school must ensure that it meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 with regard to the effective implementation of a suitable fire risk assessment prepared by a competent person, and that action is taken to mitigate any identified risks including ensuring suitable fire doors, fire exit signage and the maintenance and clearance of fire exits [paragraph 12; NMS 7.1 and. For the same reason paragraph 8(b); EYFS 3.56].

Action point 4

The school must effectively implement the school's risk assessment policy with regard to fire safety [paragraph 16(a) and (b); NMS 6.3 and, for the same reason, paragraph 8(b); EYFS 3.65].

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

- 2.17 Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised.
- 2.18 The school has not undertaken all the required checks to ensure the suitability of staff before they start work in the school. Criminal background checks, checks against the list of those prohibited from teaching, and checks of identity, medical fitness, right to work in the UK and qualifications have not been completed for all staff, with particular regard to peripatetic staff.

- 2.19 A register of staff appointments is kept but not all checks are accurately recorded on it.
- 2.20 The standards relating to the suitability of supply staff and the proprietor in paragraphs 19 and 20 are met, but those in paragraphs 18 and 21 and NMS 14 are not met.**

Action point 5

The school must ensure that all checks, including DBS checks and checks of identity, medical fitness right to work, qualifications and prohibition from teaching have been completed before appointments are confirmed and staff start to work in the school [paragraph 18(2)(b), 18(c)(i-iv), (d), (f) and (3); NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9 and 3.11].

Action point 6

The school must ensure that the single central register provides an accurate record of staff checks [paragraph 21(1), (3)(a)(i-v), (vii) and (b); NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.12].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.21 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, are provided, acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.22 The school does not provide appropriate accommodation for boarding pupils' medical and therapy needs with regard to suitable accommodation for the short-term care of sick boarders. The premises for boarding do not provide suitable accommodation that is adequately separated from other boarders.
- 2.23 The school does not ensure that boarding accommodation is suitably maintained with regard to window restrictors and the provision of hot water for washing and showers.
- 2.24 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation in paragraphs 23, 24, 26, 27 and 29 are met, but those in paragraphs 25, 28 and 30 and NMS 3, 5 and 6 are not met.**

Action point 7

The school must ensure that separate accommodation is provided for the short-term care of sick boarders which is suitably separated from accommodation for other boarders [NMS 3.2 and, for the same reason, paragraph 8(b)].

Action point 8

The school must ensure that boarding accommodation is suitably maintained and that boarders have a sufficient supply of hot water to wash and shower [paragraphs 25, 28(1)(b) and 30; NMS 5.3 and 5.4 and, for the same reason, paragraph 8(b)].

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.25 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 complaint's 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.

2.26 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.27 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.

2.28 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.29 The proprietor has not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that other standards are consistently met, and actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.30 Oversight, policy implementation and management of safeguarding; health and safety; fire safety; risk assessment; recruitment of staff; and maintenance of premises are inadequate. The school does not ensure that all required checks are undertaken on staff before their appointment. The health and safety and the risk assessment policies are not implemented effectively to ensure the school is well maintained and fire safety is assured. Accommodation for boarders is not adequate in terms of medical care and hot water.

2.31 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 13 are not met.

Action point 9

The school must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibility demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1, 13.3–13.5, 13.8 and 13.9].

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.

- The attainment and progress of pupils throughout the school is good as a result of supportive teaching.
- Levels of literacy are particularly high across the school.
- Pupils with SEND and those with EAL, especially the international boarders, make good progress because they are well supported.
- More able pupils often lack sufficient challenge in their classroom work.
- Pupils' thinking skills are not always sufficiently developed due to a lack of opportunity for independent work in the classroom.

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

- Pupils develop good levels of confidence through being part of a school with a strong sense of community.
- Good behaviour, tolerance and respect is evident throughout the school.
- The social development of pupils is excellent and they support each other at all ages.
- Pupils respect highly and appreciate the diversity of their school population.
- Pupils lack a good understanding of issues in the world today due to a lack of suitable discussion and debating opportunities.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to work independently in the classroom to further develop their critical thinking skills.
- Increase the level of challenge in classroom learning especially for the more able.
- Develop more opportunities for pupils to engage in debate and discussion of current affairs that affect young people in the world today.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupil's knowledge, skills and understanding are well developed across all ages and subject areas facilitated by teaching that is closely focused on the individual and which utilises the pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum which is supported and enhanced by investment in much improved facilities and resources by the new proprietor. Almost all parents, in response to pre-inspection questionnaires, agreed that the range of subjects and the on-line learning provided is suitable for their children and commented that the supportive teaching enables their children to make good progress.
- 3.6 The children in the EYFS make good progress and they reach or exceed their expected level of development at the end of Reception. The prep school does not take part in national curriculum tests but on the evidence available including the results from standardised tests, lesson observations and work scrutiny, their achievement is in line with or just above their level of ability. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve excellent outcomes due to close monitoring of their work and by increased academic rigour in teaching. They are enabled by a greater amount of challenge and independent work than they experience in earlier years where teaching can be too supportive and limit the development of pupils' thinking skills. Many pupils are successful in 11+ examinations and gain places at academically selective secondary schools. These levels of achievement indicate excellent progress overall to age 11.
- 3.7 Examination results at GCSE for 2017–2019 were above the national average for maintained schools. Centre-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021 show results consistent with this attainment. The small number of examinations taken by A-level pupils prevents reliable comparison with national averages, but an analysis of results and school tracking data shows many sixth formers outperform their expectations in terms of predicted grades, indicating good progress. International boarders with EAL achieve to a good level although in some subjects where extended writing in English is required, they achieve lower grades. Pupils with SEND make good and often excellent progress in their learning and achieve at higher levels in their examinations than predicted. They commented that the confidence they gain through one-to-one specialist help and the close monitoring and support of teachers enables them to perform to their best. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.8 Prep pupils make good progress in communication skills and they speak confidently in class and listen respectfully to each other's views. Literacy levels are particularly high. They are proficient writers, from mark making in the Early Years, to using subordinate clauses in Years 1 and 2. Young children in Nursery and Reception can say their phonic sounds with correct pronunciation. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they continue to make good and often excellent progress with their English as they move up the prep school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 write simple sentences but soon progress to write descriptively at length. Year 5 and 6 pupils show high levels of perceptive thought and imagination in excellent standards of extended writing. Pupils are able to transfer these skills to other areas of learning. This was evident in a Year 2 science activity where pupils were able to sort and classify items independently, according to the material they were made from and write up their findings in a list. They have developed a good understanding of nature and ecological issues as evidenced in their work in both science and geography and show excellent levels of skill across subjects such as Art, PE and cooking and were keen to demonstrate their excellent singing in choir practice.
- 3.9 Senior pupils develop strong skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Literacy and communication skills continue to be strong and they present well-developed ideas in their writing and oral presentations. The presentation of their written work is excellent and is characterised by good structure and a range of vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Some pupils in the examination years are yet to master more sophisticated vocabulary that would enable them to fully appreciate the more complex literary texts and to enable their work to improve to a higher level. Pupils articulate their views in humanities subjects with understanding such as when discussing the impact of war on mental health in history, and the ecological impact of climate change in geography, and they

demonstrate good listening skills in discussion. In science they can think for themselves when prompted and can hypothesise in straightforward situations. When required they can analyse data and text and synthesise information with some success, as in the excellent progress they made in understanding multi-step calculations in chemistry. Pupils throughout the senior school exhibit strong skills and imagination in art, drama, design technology and music. Evidence from school performances such as the rehearsals for 'We will Rock You' show their ability to combine their learning as well as being able to transfer it successfully in a productive way.

- 3.10 At all ages pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well developed and applied successfully across other subjects. In the Early Years and in Years 1 and 2, the children develop a good understanding of numbers. Reception children use numbers confidently and understand that big numbers are made up of smaller ones. By Years 5 and 6 pupils are confident in expressing mathematical terminology and in producing graphs and charts to show data, and in spotting errors and making corrections. Senior pupils use numerical skills in a wide variety of lessons as demonstrated by Year 10 pupils competently balancing the equation for photosynthesis. At the most complex level, Year 13 pupils handled numbers and calculations adroitly as they re-arranged complex integral equations in further mathematics. Pupils have developed competent ICT skills to support their learning and use computer programs confidently when application is required and to access their homework and their targets for improvement.
- 3.11 Pupils from an early age enjoy planning and organising their own work and they establish good habits of study. Scrutiny of their work and observation in the classroom showed pupils of all ages work conscientiously to complete the tasks set and to do their best. They know when to seek help and support but are sometimes inclined to let teaching lead their learning and fail to work problems out for themselves by using their own initiative. More able pupils do ask challenging questions but are not always allowed sufficient opportunity in lessons to develop their understanding or express their own ideas and opinions through further debate. Pupils are able to improve in response to the feedback given by informative marking. The most successful improvement comes when feedback states what went well and what could improve, then pupils read the feedback and then make a comment in return to show that they have understood.
- 3.12 Pupils make good use of the opportunities they have to engage in several extra-curricular activities. They particularly demonstrate high standards in drama and music productions, the school band and choir. Many are successful in achieving high grades in instrumental and speech and drama examinations. They compete against other schools in sports with moderate success, winning some of the matches that they play in netball and football. Some pupils represent other teams outside of school and there are pupils who achieve success, especially in individual sports, at a county or divisional standard. Prep pupils reported in interviews that sporting activities are limited in the prep school and inspectors agreed with this observation. Pupils have been successful in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at bronze level. In the past, pupils have gained some success in poetry competitions and mathematics and science Olympiads.
- 3.13 Pupils show excellent attitudes towards their learning and arrive in lessons ready to learn. They are focused and attentive and they are determined to succeed in their studies. Pupils are always willing to work collaboratively in class and from a young age are encouraged to share, listen to others and help those who may be in need of support. They are co-operative learners and work in a positive way with their teachers to ensure that they have a comfortable and safe working environment. Boarders and EAL pupils are highly independent in organising themselves and they persevere when they have difficulties with understanding.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.15 Pupils develop a strong sense of personal confidence and high self-esteem as they go through the school. They report that this is a result of being in a school community which is kind, friendly and supportive. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a large majority of pupils reported that it is a fun and happy place to learn, and that they are helped to thrive by staff who are supportive and understanding. Pupils assert that it is a school for everyone, where all will be accepted and encouraged to do their best. Parents also reported that the school is a positive and nurturing environment endorsing the school aim to provide a nurturing and supportive community that enables pupils to develop their strengths and talents. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- 3.16 Pupils converse with natural confidence and demonstrate high levels of self-understanding, recognising their own strengths and weaknesses. In the prep school, pupils from the youngest ages are able to reflect upon and discuss their learning and show a high level of engagement in their efforts to do their best. They show good levels of perseverance when completing tasks and grow in confidence through the constant support and praise from staff. Senior pupils have proved their resilience and perseverance recently in the way that they have adapted to new situations and changes to the school routines. In the face of difficulty or when challenged intellectually, senior pupils show a strong work ethic and can identify what to do next to ensure they are making steady progress. Sometimes they are over-critical of themselves not recognising their strengths, but they gain in confidence through the teaching which presents carefully planned targets that pupils can achieve over time.
- 3.17 Pupils have good awareness of the importance of the personal decisions they make. Prep pupils are quick and eager to help; they make suggestions in the classroom and at play to broaden their learning. Children in the EYFS thrive when they have a free choice of activity and the older prep pupils enjoy their learning more when they are allowed to take the initiative to see where their learning can take them. This was demonstrated by Year 6 pupils in English where pupils used their imagination in considering suspense and emotions. Senior pupils show a very good awareness of the importance of their decisions for the next stage of their life. They fully understand that their subject choices for GCSE and A-level examinations, and strong academic performance will help determine their future choices. Boarders try to strike the right balance between work and free time by deciding how to plan their time and make healthy choices in their daily lives to ensure good physical and mental health. Pupils of all ages use well the opportunities they are given to make decisions to help the school and the local community. They join the school council and the food committee to give feedback to the school and to try to effect change. Recent changes they have contributed to include changing the appearance regulations for female pupils and improving food. Pupils are justifiably proud of the money they have raised for charity and each term they are able to vote on the charities that the school will support. A lack of leadership roles, especially in the senior school limits the development of skills that come with decision making associated with responsibility.
- 3.18 Whilst some pupils found it hard to articulate an understanding of their spiritual development, they do express an appreciation of the importance of faith and of the non-material aspects of life. Pupils are encouraged to learn about other faiths and cultures, and they mentioned in discussion celebrating events such as Diwali in the Early Years. The international boarding community influences the understanding and acceptance of different faiths and beliefs across the senior school. Pupils feel opportunities to further explore their own faith have recently been hindered by the lack of school assemblies and times of reflection together as a community due to the rules surrounding the Covid pandemic. Material possessions were not of a high priority when talking of what is important to them. Pupils appreciate the values of life such as kindness and being friendly and helpful people. They value

opportunities for reflection and appreciate the natural world around them. They express their love of the school grounds and gardens, and of the sense of well-being they get from music and drama.

- 3.19 The pupils develop an excellent ability to distinguish right from wrong and show a good understanding and respect for rules and laws. They develop a mature common sense and don't base their behaviour solely around a set of rules but, instead, base their behaviour around respect for each other and the environment around them. Pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others, and are quick to apologise if necessary. They are willing to challenge any misbehaviour and unkindness. This became very clear in an interview with sixth-form pupils who commented on how willing they would be to challenge each other's misdemeanours. Pupil's behaviour towards their peers, staff and those with protective characteristics is very respectful, friendly and inclusive. In interviews they reported that cases are rare of any racial, misogynist or homophobic comments or inappropriate banter. The records of behaviour and sanctions kept by the school confirm this. Pupils are fully aware of how damaging, hurtful and offensive this type of comment is. They felt very strongly that pupils would challenge anyone who would be disrespectful in their community.
- 3.20 Social development of pupils is excellent. They form positive relationships with each other across a range of year groups and are kind when interacting with their peers and sharing resources. In Nursery, children were willing to share their toys and ideas within a larger group. When asked what makes a good friend, one pupil was able to articulate that it was because, 'that's who plays with me'. Prep pupils collaborate well and support each other in communal enterprises as observed in their organisation of a cake sale for charity. Older pupils show concern and support for younger pupils or those new to the school and all ages mix happily together in joint ventures such as school drama productions. Boarders readily value the diversity in their international community and show tolerance towards each other. New boarders are helped to settle into boarding and say they quickly make friends who offer them support if needed. In lessons, pupils work effectively in pairs or small groups and provide support for pupils with SEND or for those with EAL. Their involvement in local community activities have been restricted recently but choirs are once again looking forward to singing in the local care homes at Christmas and to expanding their charity efforts once again to the national and international level.
- 3.21 Pupils highly respect and value the diversity of cultural backgrounds in the school, especially in boarding. During the interviews it became obvious that pupils all feel valued and respected. Pupils said that a real strength of the school is that they learn to live with those from different cultures, backgrounds and conditions from a very young age, so tolerance and acceptance is natural to them. Pupils have an effective awareness of fundamental British values, such as those characterised by the democratic process, but they do not demonstrate a thorough understanding of British institutions and some lack a worldliness when it comes to current affairs such as issues surrounding race or the safety of women. They live in a secure school community and the recent lack of school trips of an educational and cultural nature has resulted in a more insular understanding of world events and opportunities.
- 3.22 Throughout the school pupils show a good understanding of how to be physically and mentally healthy, particularly in terms of diet, exercise, and a balanced lifestyle. The older pupils spoke of their appreciation of the recent expansion of sporting activities as this allows them more choice to stay healthy; options now include climbing, golf and fencing, as well as football and other sports. The pupils also recognise that a healthy diet is important. Pupils spoken to were mixed in their views on the food provided by the school, and some would like to see more healthy options. Inspectors considered the food provided included a suitable range of healthy food, especially at lunch time. Pupils feel they have a basic understanding of how to stay safe outside of school and online and will seek professional advice or support if needed. They think, however, that they need more education on drugs, alcohol and how to navigate the social difficulties they might face outside of school. Inspection evidence shows that the recent reduction in time for personal, social and health education in the senior school has resulted in slower progress in matters pertinent to health and safety of young people in society generally,

although their understanding in key areas relating to relationships and sex education is being developed successfully.

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 proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house/form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting inspector
Mr Tony Hawksley	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, IAPS school)
Mrs Victoria Playford	Team inspector (Head teacher, ISA school)
Mr Koen Claeys	Team inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Mr William Yates	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Gareth Price	Accompanying inspector
Mrs Elena Hesse	Boarding inspector (Vice Principal, ISA School)