

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

**Bromsgrove School** 

May 2023

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School	Bromsgrove So	hool		
DfE number	885/6006			
Registered charity number	1098740			
Address	Bromsgrove So			
	Worcester Roa	ld		
	Bromsgrove			
	Worcestershir	e		
	B61 7DU			
Telephone number	01527 579679			
Email address	enquiries@bro	omsgrove-s	chool.co.uk	
Headmaster	Mr Michael Pu	nt		
Chair of governors	Mr Michael Lu	ckman		
Proprietor	Governors of E	Bromsgrove	e School	
Age range	13 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1040			
	Day pupils	571	Boarders	469
	Seniors	603	Sixth Form	437
Inspection dates	10 to 12 May 2	2023		

# School's Details

### 1. Background Information

#### About the school

- 1.1 Bromsgrove Senior School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. The senior school, together with the prep school, pre-prep school and Winterfold, which were inspected at the same time, are component parts of Bromsgrove School family. The school, which was founded in 1553, is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The directors of the company are all trustees of the charity. The headmaster oversees the four schools. There are six boarding houses for senior school pupils, all of which are located on the main school site.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection a wellbeing centre has been established and there has been extensive refurbishment and development of boarding facilities. The current head and the current chair of governors were appointed in September 2022.

#### What the school seeks to do

1.3 The school aims to provide an education that fosters tolerance, respect, compassion and humility. It seeks to develop happy, confident and motivated pupils who live fulfilled lives whilst enriching the lives of others.

#### About the pupils

1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and other family backgrounds. Boarders include international pupils from 57 different countries. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school and the school's own assessment indicate that the overall ability of the pupils is broadly average. The school has identified 100 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include speech, language, communication, social and emotional difficulties, all of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 377 pupils, 173 of whom receive additional support for their English. The school identifies those pupils who are more able and the curriculum and extra-curricular programme is adjusted to meet their needs.

### 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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> <u>Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools</u>.

### **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 The school's GCSE, A-level, BTEC and IB results in the years 2020 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, 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 wellbeing 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'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

School name	National Curriculum name
Lower Fourth	Year 9
Upper Fourth	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

### **Key findings**

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
  - Pupils are articulate communicators who express themselves clearly, both orally and in writing.
  - Pupils are highly motivated and have extremely positive attitudes to learning.
  - Pupils excel in a wide variety of sporting, creative and academic extra-curricular activities.
  - Pupils use digital technology naturally to support and extend their learning.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
  - Pupils have a decidedly strong sense of community and they are highly successful at collaborating both inside and outside the classroom.
  - Pupils have a remarkably strong sense of self-understanding and an excellent awareness of how to improve and achieve their goals.
  - Pupils are naturally inclusive and demonstrate strong acceptance of those who have different backgrounds or beliefs to their own.
  - Pupils embrace the many opportunities to improve the lives of others and make an excellent contribution to the community within and beyond school.

#### Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

• Ensure that all pupils have regular opportunities to develop the depth of their academic curiosity and ambition.

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

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils, including those with SEND and with EAL, make excellent progress over time as evidenced by comprehensive tracking data. Results at GCSE and A level show that most pupils attain grades higher than expected for those of similar ability. In 2022 a very large majority of GCSE results were achieved at grades 6 to 9, with over two-fifths of results graded 8 to 9. In 2020 and 2021, centre-assessed and teacher-assessed grades showed a similar level of attainment. In 2022, over half of A-level results were graded A\* to A. In centre-assessed and teacher-assessed results in 2020 and 2021 results were of a similarly high standard. As a result, a large majority of pupils are successful in gaining places at universities of their choice. In discussion, pupils were keen to point to the individualised support and encouragement they receive from both teachers and tutors as key contributory factors to their academic progress.
- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes towards learning are consistently excellent. They take a high level of responsibility for their studies, demonstrating an intrinsic motivation and determination to do well. Pupils with EAL displayed an eagerness to succeed when they asked pertinent questions about the game *Monopoly* in a Year 11 economics lesson. Pupils are naturally collaborative and there is a common currency to help and care for each other in lessons and beyond. In physical education, Year 9 pupils worked together extremely successfully when tagging opponents in mini basketball games. In curriculum support lessons, pupils with SEND showed particularly strong collaborative study skills as they engaged in a morphology exercise which involved pupil feedback and coaching. In some subjects pupils take notably strong leadership in their learning. This is evident in GCSE and A-level art portfolios which show great originality. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school equips their children with the teamworking and collaborative skills they need in later life.
- 3.7 Pupils develop communication skills of the highest quality. Pupils are articulate, expressing themselves clearly and with purpose, with numerous opportunities for discussion and debate in the classroom and beyond. This was evident in a Year 12 English lesson as pupils listened supportively to each other to develop good insights in their understanding of the portrayal of the heroine in Gothic fiction. Pupils listen with respect, not seeking to dominate but rather strengthening their learning through considering one another's viewpoints. In religious studies, Year 10 pupils, including those with EAL, showed excellent oral communication skills as they articulated key messages from a presentation on abortion. Pupils' writing skills are well developed as seen through, for example, well-written essays in English and extensively researched projects. In discussions, pupils demonstrated excellent communication skills as they reflected on their roles within the school community and relationships with their peers.
- 3.8 Pupils make rapid progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding. This is as a result of the school's supportive and collaborative learning environment coupled with their own determination. In Latin, Year 13 pupils demonstrated an excellent knowledge of *The Annals of Tacitus*, giving in-depth details of each protagonist. Year 12 pupils displayed an extensive knowledge of organic chemistry as they designed their own complex experiments. In history, Year 13 pupils were extremely knowledgeable when discussing how Henry VII secured the throne and ended the dynastic struggle of the Wars of the Roses. In response to the questionnaire a small minority of pupils did not agree that lessons are interesting. Inspectors found that pupils engage positively in response to the teaching they receive. In physics, Year 12 pupils responded with enthusiasm when designing their own experiments to test resistors. In a Year 9 English lesson, there was an energetic and natural rapport between pupils and teachers as they engaged in discussion of the poem *From Far, from Eve.* Older pupils demonstrated excellent and deep knowledge through extended essays, such as the reasons behind the change in women's rights in the mid-twentieth century.

- 3.9 Pupils display decidedly strong numerical skills. This is due to the provision of a broad range of mathematics courses and the availability of extra support sessions. In mathematics, Year 13 pupils displayed exceptionally strong numerical fluency as they solved problems against the clock in an online quiz. Pupils apply their excellent mathematical knowledge effectively to other areas of learning. In art, Year 10 pupils utilised their excellent mathematical skills in their design and execution of artefacts inspired by *The Life Aquatic.* In a Year 9 biology lesson, pupils showed equally strong mathematical understanding when interpreting graphs and pie charts of epidemiological data.
- 3.10 Pupils are highly competent users of information and communication technology (ICT) and apply their skills well to support their learning throughout the curriculum. This is as a result of the initiative of leaders and governors to encourage and facilitate the use of technology across the curriculum. In classical civilisation, Year 11 pupils used devices to complete a shared document that captured detailed analytical notes on a range of visual resources. Pupils in Year 9 used sophisticated digital technology to create individualised designs for the manufacture of brass key fobs. In the scrutiny of pupils' work, note-taking software was used very effectively to facilitate a high-quality feedback dialogue between pupils and staff. Pupils with SEND make excellent use of hardware and software to enhance their learning. This enables them to make progress in line with their peers.
- 3.11 As they progress through the school pupils develop increasingly strong study skills. In discussions, boarders were clear that the support they receive in boarding time from both staff and their peers helps them to develop these skills. Older pupils have well-developed thinking skills which are utilised very effectively to enhance and extend their learning. In some lessons pupils use these skills with confidence because they are encouraged to extend their understanding through open questions and appropriate tasks. In religious studies, Year 12 pupils showed an excellent ability to synthesise a range of sources as they researched whether good ethics is good for business. In computer studies, sixthform pupils utilised excellent problem-solving skills as they converted pseudo-code to a programming language. Some pupils display an excellent ability to research effectively by using a wide range of sources. This was seen in extended project work and art coursework on topics ranging from the economic cycles of the USA in the 1920s to the deterioration of architecture over time. However, opportunities for all pupils to develop their academic curiosity are sometimes missed.
- 3.12 Throughout the school pupils achieve excellent standards in a wide range of co-curricular activities and pursuits. They regularly gain considerable success at county, regional and national level. Sporting successes include being national finalists in basketball, cross country, hockey, netball, rugby and tennis. Individuals are members of national squads in a wide range of sports. Pupils excel in the UK Maths Challenge, Science Olympiads, Young Enterprise and coding competitions. Other notable successes include a first place at Mallory Park for an electric car designed, built and raced by the pupils. Pupils gain strong success in external music examinations. Large numbers embark on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award with many completing bronze, silver and gold. Pupils achieve highly in these areas partly because they have extremely strong independent and collaborative skills, but also because they are encouraged by the school to pursue their interests to the highest level.

### The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 From the moment they join the school, pupils make rapid progress in developing their self-confidence, resilience, self-awareness and other personal skills. Pupils show a distinctive degree of self-confidence without any hint of arrogance. This amply meets the aim of the school to foster humility and develop confidence. Pupils displayed a profound sense of modesty during discussions with inspectors in which they said they are able to be themselves within the caring environment of the school. They referenced the pastoral ethos generated through the house system which is based on positive relationships between pupils and staff. In a Year 12 politics lesson, pupils demonstrated excellent self-confidence and resilience as they responded to questions from the floor in a debate between teams representing

Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn. Pupils, including those with SEND, show excellent levels of resilience when overcoming challenges as they master new techniques. For example, in a Year 10 Art project pupils persevered when using glue-sticks to apply feathers to balsa wood. Boarders show excellent self-confidence, as seen when they chatted with inspectors in a totally natural way during a tour of the school. This is as a result of the confidence boarders gain through living away from home and developing independence in a supportive environment. In their questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents said that the school helps their children to be confident and independent. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

- 3.15 Pupils display an outstanding sense of community. They work together completely naturally in activities, and the supportive environment enables overseas boarders to settle into their new surroundings and form successful relationships with their peers. The pupils' contribution to a harmonious multi-national boarding community is based on tolerance, support and empathy. Pupils have a decidedly strong level of social awareness and they enjoy taking opportunities provided to work together to achieve common goals. For example, pupils collaborated successfully when putting up tents together to practise for their Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions. In English, Year 9 pupils displayed excellent social awareness of the invasion of Ukraine as they shared ideas about Simon Armitage's poem *Resistance*. In discussions, pupils readily identified examples of initiatives that they had taken to achieve positive change. These included the opportunity for pupils to exchange unwanted uniform items and the introduction of basketball for female pupils. This is due to a developing culture of pupil voice facilitated by leaders and governors.
- 3.16 Pupils are extremely good at supporting others in the school. In discussions with inspectors, they spoke warmly of a culture of mutual support where pupils and staff will go out of their way to help each other. Through the assumption of leadership roles, pupils contribute to the school community in many different ways. For example, as heads of school, heads of houses and monitors. Pupils also contribute strongly through sports leadership and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), where older pupils coach or teach younger pupils. Boarders are notably generous with their time and sensitive to the needs of others in providing emotional support to fellow boarders and offering help with academic tasks. Pupils make a positive contribution to the local community and to wider society through charity and outreach work. For example, they plan activities for a local charity that supports the homeless and regularly engage in litter picking to enhance the local environment. Pupils in the CCF regularly volunteer in the local community by handing out water bottles at running events. There is a strong understanding amongst pupils that community service is important and they willingly visit local residential homes and volunteer in charity shops. This fulfils the school's aim to develop confident pupils who enrich the lives of others.
- 3.17 Pupils have an excellent understanding of staying safe, both in terms of their digital lives as well as with regards to their physical and mental health. They are extremely good at balancing a wide range of activities with academic work, whilst also looking after their own wellbeing. In this they are supported by a pastoral system which focuses on empowering pupils to take care of themselves. In drama, Year 10 pupils displayed an excellent knowledge of the value of being physically healthy and staying safe as they explored the power and meaning of movement in a devised paired choreography piece. Pupils of all ages are keen to participate in the many sporting activities available, as they are highly conscious that an active lifestyle is good for their mental health. In discussions, pupils displayed an excellent understanding of the role of food in promoting a healthy lifestyle for sports players and described how walking in the fresh air in the school grounds is beneficial to their mental health.
- 3.18 Pupils show an excellent understanding of the need for positive behaviour towards their peers and recognise the importance of contributing to a respectful environment. They have a very good understanding of their personal responsibility for those behaviours identified as being of most concern for the welfare of others, including online abuse, drugs and harmful sexual behaviour. Pupils have a particularly strong awareness of rules and laws and can discuss issues of morality with confidence. In English, Year 12 pupils displayed an excellent understanding of the moral dilemma and ethical issues

at the heart of *The Tempest*. In a business studies lesson, pupils showed decidedly strong moral understanding when discussing current unethical practices in organisations. Pupils behave well towards each other, often supporting and encouraging one another in difficult moments. A remarkable sense of calmness was notable amongst the pupils throughout the inspection.

- 3.19 Throughout their time at the school, pupils develop a strong spiritual understanding and awareness of the non-material aspects of life. This is apparent in the obvious pleasure they derive from friendships, creativity and their natural surroundings. Pupils in Year 13 showed excellent appreciation of the environment as they used their art to highlight the damage being done by plastic waste in Thailand. In English, Year 9 pupils were reflective and ably demonstrated spiritual insight when interpreting a poem engraved on a stone sphere on the school campus. Pupils described how they enjoy the stimulus of chapel talks and appreciate the availability of the chapel for occasional quiet reflection or to light a candle. Excellent philosophical appreciation was seen in theory of knowledge essays where pupils interrogated the complicity of the French Government in the Rwandan genocide. In discussions, pupils spoke of the strong feelings they experience of belonging to a community when they sing together in the school chapel.
- 3.20 Pupils have an excellent understanding of the significance of their decision-making in determining their future opportunities and self-fulfilment. This was shown in the reflection by Year 13 pupils on their subject choices at A level and IB in shaping university aspirations and future careers. This is as a result of the university and careers advice available for pupils and the support of their tutors and house staff. In discussions pupils spoke of good decisions they had made, with the help of their teachers, to change an academic pathway for a course where they would be more successful. Pupils make positive decisions to join clubs and activities which develop their personality and interests and support their wellbeing. Boarders have a particularly strong awareness of how the daily decisions that they make have an impact on their experience of school and life.
- 3.21 Pupils show an excellent appreciation of diversity, as shown in their reflections on the natural relationships between pupils of different ethnicities and nationalities. In history, Year 9 pupils showed excellent respect and sensitivity when discussing the ramifications of the assassination of Malcolm X. Senior pupils launched a project that promotes wellbeing and values diversity as they are very keen that everyone in the school is able to be accepted for who they are. In discussions, pupils noted that discussions in the LGBTQ+ society helped to promote inclusivity. During tours of the school, inspectors observed that pupils show excellent respect for each other's differences in multi-national boarding houses. Boarders strongly appreciate others from different backgrounds to their own and are keen to share their traditional meals and learn about each other's cultures.

# 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 chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses 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

Mrs Sue Clarke	Reporting inspector
Mr David Williams	Compliance team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mr John Davies	Team inspector (Senior deputy head, HMC school)
Mr John Hunt	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC and GSA association school)
Mr James Priory	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mrs Valerie Stewart	Team inspector (Former assistant head, ISA school)
Mrs Christine Cunniffe	Team inspector for boarding (Principal, SofH school)
Mr Thierry Lauze	Team inspector for boarding (Assistant head, HMC school)