

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Cumnor House School, Sussex

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Cumnor House	e School		
DfE number	938/6019			
Registered charity number	801924			
Address	Cumnor House	e School		
	London Road			
	Danehill			
	Haywards Hea	ıth		
	West Sussex			
	RH17 7HT			
Telephone number	01825 790347	,		
Email address	office@cumno	or.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Fergus Llewellyn			
Chair of governors	Mr James Tanner 2 to 13			
Age range				
Number of pupils on roll	407			
	Day pupils	375	Boarders	32
	EYFS	99		
	Juniors	216	Seniors	92
	(Years 1 – 6)		Years 7 – 8)	
Inspection dates	15 to 17 November 2022			

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Cumnor House School, Sussex is a co-educational day and boarding school. The school was founded over 80 years ago in Croydon and moved to Danehill in 1948. A charitable education trust was established in 1988. The school comprises the Nursery, pre-prep and prep departments. A range of boarding options is available for Years 7 and 8. Members of the governing body are trustees and directors of the company limited by guarantee. Since the previous inspection, a new chair, vice chair and headmaster have been appointed.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 Underpinned by its Christian values and its motto, 'Aim High, Be Kind, Dare to be Different', the school aims to excite and inspire pupils through its broad curriculum and teaching which seeks to capture the imagination, excite, engage and motivate. The school community strives to support pupils in being themselves, being healthy, being happy and achieving their best by knowing and valuing each individual and providing a balance of support and challenge.

About the pupils

1.3 Most pupils live relatively close to the school. Nationally standardised data provided by the school indicate that, overall, the ability of the pupils is above average for those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 95 pupils as having special educational needs, 51 of whom receive additional support. No pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Fourteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), eight of whom receive additional support for their English. The needs of the more able are addressed by providing extension work within the classroom and access to a scholarship stream. The needs of those pupils with additional talents in sport and the creative arts are met through access to specialist coaching and facilities.

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 (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, 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.

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> Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

Key findings

2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards)
Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, relevant
requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated
requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 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 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 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.
- 2.5 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 standard 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 and 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.
- 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 standard 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 standard 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 standard 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.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding.
 - Pupils maintain an excellent rate of progress in mathematics and English throughout the school.
 - Pupils demonstrate outstanding speaking and listening skills, their reading is at a high level, and they write fluently.
 - Pupils develop excellent skills in number, the wider aspects of mathematics and across the curriculum.
 - Pupils are developing their study skills in order to raise their progress and attainment even higher.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils show exceptionally high levels of self-understanding and emotional maturity for their age.
 - Pupils appreciate strongly the non-material aspects of life; they reflect with maturity well beyond their age on the spiritual dimensions of humanity.
 - Pupils have an excellent moral understanding; they demonstrate kindness to one another, understanding the impact of their words and actions.
 - Pupils' social awareness is excellent, contributing strongly to a positive, collaborative and supportive community.
 - Pupils are beginning to understand the meaning of diversity and equality within modern British society.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - Enhance pupils' learning through the development of their study skills.
 - Extend and deepen pupils' understanding of diversity, other cultures and traditions.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school successfully lives up to its motto of 'Aim High, Be Kind and Dare to be Different'. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents who completed the questionnaire stated that teaching and the boarding experience provided by the school enables their children to make progress. Governors know the school extremely well providing support and appropriate challenge as part of the school's ethos of continual improvement.
- 3.6 Teachers' assessments in the EYFS indicate that almost all children meet the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. In standardised tests for mathematics and English, most pupils attain above the national average compared to the nationally standardised scores for the tests. An excellent rate of progress is maintained throughout the school, as reflected in externally standardised tests, detailed tracking of pupils' progress, pupils' written and digital work, lesson observations and discussions with pupils. In response to the questionnaire, the vast majority of parents stated that their children's educational needs are met effectively. The achievement of pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent, as shown by the rapid progress they make in relation to their starting points and needs. This is due to thorough assessment of the individual needs of each pupil by highly skilled staff and the effective use of provision plans by teachers to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Throughout the school, pupils develop excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across the 3.7 curriculum. Strong contributory factors to high achievement are the expertise, enthusiasm and high expectations of teachers combined with an extensive curriculum and well-chosen resources. During discussions, pupils spoke proudly about their work stating strongly that teachers motivate them to learn. They say that marking and specific feedback, including the next steps for learning, enable them to improve. Pupils develop high-level scientific skills including observation, classification and prediction through a practical and experimental approach to science. This was exemplified by younger junior pupils when they organised themselves into representative food chains and older junior pupils when conducting a displacement reaction experiment by mixing iron powder with copper sulphate. Pupils demonstrate excellent understanding of human and social geography as exemplified by senior pupils when studying the impact of wildfires in Australia and their possible links to climate change. During geography field studies, older pupils gained a deep understanding of coastal erosion and longshore drift through collating and interpreting their primary data. Pupils demonstrated excellent historical understanding when describing how Victorian children must have felt when living in a workhouse.
- 3.8 From an early age, all pupils develop the ability to perform confidently to a wide range of audiences including during assemblies, in school productions and when entertaining residents in a local care home. The balance, gross and fine-motor skills of younger pupils are well-developed through a wide range of indoor and outdoor play opportunities as well as through music and movement lessons from specialist staff. During a music lesson, younger children in the EYFS were observed engaging successfully in a range of movements to music including marching at various speeds around the room. Older pupils enthusiastically take part in a range of sports including football, rugby, netball, cricket, hockey, swimming, athletics and tennis. By the end of Year 8, pupils have developed a wide range of physical skills that enable them to achieve highly, including in local and national competitions. Throughout the school pupils use a wide range of tools, materials and techniques to produce excellent work in art and design and technology (DT) as exemplified in their scaled self-portraits in the style of Modigliani and when designing and making jewellery using copper. Pupils' original work is displayed throughout the school and prominently in the art and DT departments which inspires them to be even more creative.
- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate outstanding speaking and listening skills including in French and Latin. They make connections between the roots of languages communicating confidently with an understanding of pronunciation and the grammatical rules of the language as exemplified by older juniors when

conjugating regular -er verbs in French and in Latin when translating from the present tense into the imperfect tense. The vast majority of young children use and apply their phonic knowledge to decode words when reading from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Children in Reception know all of their initial sounds and blend sounds effectively and accurately when building and decoding words. The consistent use of songs and actions supports effectively their auditory discrimination and articulation of the sounds needed for secure language acquisition. Throughout the school, pupils listen and respond respectfully to adults and their peers, expressing themselves confidently with sensitive consideration of others. They articulate their thoughts and ideas maturely using a wide range of advanced vocabulary. During discussions, pupils listened intently to their partners when sharing and reflecting on their work and considering what helps them to learn. By the time they leave the school, the vast majority of pupils read confidently at a high level appreciating a wide range of literature at a deep level. Their high levels of reading are particularly developed through the school's carefully planned and extensive reading scheme and time given to reading, particularly after lunch and for boarders prior to lights out. By Year 8, most pupils write fluently at great depth for a variety of purposes. They plan their writing effectively and use appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation as exemplified by older junior pupils who used correctly relative pronouns, commas and clauses to add information about the noun when writing sentences; and seniors who understood and identified personification in a range of texts including The Kingdom by the Sea by Robert Westall prior to using this literary technique in their own work.

- 3.10 As they move through the school, pupils develop excellent skills in number and the wider aspects of mathematics. All pupils make excellent progress as a result of the well-planned mathematics scheme and lessons that provide effective support where pupils lack confidence and challenge for all. Children in the EYFS make strong progress in number subitising confidently when counting a range of objects as well as developing confidence in the wider aspects of mathematics as exemplified when comparing shoe size. Younger juniors were observed visually representing equal groups to demonstrate the link with multiplication and seniors when estimating and calculating the gradient of a line given two coordinates. Pupils also display confident mathematical skills across the curriculum as exemplified by pre-prep pupils using shape and symmetry to create a four-piece tiled design in the style of William Morris, in science and geography when constructing graphs and interpreting data, and in music when counting notes of different value. By Year 8, pupils calculate confidently mentally using the four rules of number, apply their knowledge when problem-solving and accurately use a range of written methods to solve challenging problems including time, measure and shape.
- 3.11 Pupils' ability to use and apply information and communication technology (ICT) develops systematically through discrete computing lessons as well as across the curriculum so that, by the time they reach Year 8, most pupils are highly confident and proficient in their use of ICT. Younger pupils were observed developing their ICT skills through the use of programmable toys and older pupils produced high-level multi-media presentations for history as well as using advanced software when constructing a bridge from spaghetti.
- 3.12 Most pupils plan and organise their work effectively and are developing a range of study skills including hypothesising, drawing knowledge from a range of sources, synthesising information and applying their knowledge to new situations. During lessons, pupils ask challenging questions about their subjects and all aspects of the world and beyond as exemplified when comparing the plague in history with contemporary viruses. During discussions, pupils stated that they appreciate the support they receive from teachers when preparing for examinations and would like to develop further their independent research skills across the curriculum.
- 3.13 Pupils consistently achieve entry to the senior school of their choice successfully undertaking a range of entrance requirements. They have an excellent measure of success in scholarships and competitions at regional and national level including in English, science, humanities, art, the performing arts and sport. A considerable number of pupils learn to play musical instruments and have achieved success in the Associated Board of Royal School of Music (ABRSM) examinations. These

include strings, wind instruments, piano, flute, brass and singing. A number of pupils also achieve success in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) examinations. All pupils are encouraged to represent the school as part of a team. They have achieved an excellent range of individual and team successes in sporting competitions including netball, hockey and athletics. Pupils also achieve highly through a wide range of clubs and co-curricular activities, including karate, ballet, riding, yoga, coding and choreography.

3.14 Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are enthusiastic, hardworking and highly productive in their individual work and in collaboration with others.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.16 The school successfully achieves its aim of supporting pupils in being themselves, being healthy, being happy and achieving their best. This is because leaders, governors and staff support the development of a culture underpinned by kindness and an ethos where personal development is of the highest priority. All parents who responded to the questionnaire stated that the school helps their children to develop strong teamwork and social skills and that the boarding experience supports their children's personal development.
- 3.17 Pupils show exceptionally high levels of self-understanding and emotional maturity for their age. During discussions, they were self-reflective and able to evaluate their strengths and areas for development. They are highly enthusiastic about their wellbeing lessons, stating that these enable them to develop an understanding of emotions and how to develop resilience, self-discipline and self-esteem. Pupils felt well-prepared for their next schools and stated that they appreciate the support they receive from a range of teaching and support staff.
- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate well-developed decision-making skills. During discussions, they spoke maturely and with insight about what impact decisions they make have on their wellbeing and future opportunities such as which school they go to. Children in the EYFS decide which direction their learning and play will take when selecting their activities and resources. They are supported effectively by staff who know when to engage directly in children's learning and when to let them pursue their decisions uninterrupted. Older pupils are also supported in taking decisions as part of outdoor learning and play. They speak with enthusiasm about the opportunities they have to engage in managed risks such as fire-lighting and whittling wood using a knife. Pupils say that they are not afraid to make mistakes and that they can make choices to overcome their difficulties and challenges. Pupils appreciate being able to contribute to wider school decisions through the school council and food committee. They particularly appreciate being able to choose charities for fund raising and finding out the purpose of the charity and how their contribution will make a difference.
- 3.19 Pupils appreciate strongly the non-material aspects of life which are promoted successfully through the school's pastoral system, wellbeing curriculum and an award system that celebrates qualities such as kindness, thoughtfulness, helpfulness and generosity. During discussions, pupils stated that they have time for reflection during assemblies, some lessons and particularly when playing and learning in the school grounds. They value highly the outdoor curriculum and the beauty of their surroundings. Nursery pupils were observed walking in the woods marvelling at the noises the birds made. They displayed great excitement at the colours of the leaves and how wet the puddles were as they jumped in them and felt the water on their skin. Older pupils reflect with maturity well beyond their age on the spiritual dimensions of humanity. For example, when studying *To Autumn* by Keats they explored emotion through the use of personification and deep feelings expressed in the poem. Remembrance displays of pupils' work also demonstrate empathy and a mature understanding of the impact of war.
- 3.20 Pupils have an excellent moral understanding. All parents and the vast majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaires stated that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Pupils say

that most pupils are kind and well-behaved. During discussions, they stated that rules and laws are important and that it is important to accept responsibility for your own behaviour. They felt that the school rewards good behaviour and that there are fair consequences if behaviour falls below expectations. They think that the school's restorative justice approach helps everyone to focus on understanding behaviour, to listen and to find ways for all to move forward if there are any conflicts. This mature understanding of morality was observed during a philosophy and ethics lesson where older pupils reflected deeply on the concept of moral courage and justice in relation to the law.

- 3.21 Pupils' social awareness is excellent, contributing strongly to a positive, collaborative and supportive community. They show an excellent awareness of how to interact with others including a mature understanding of the impact of their actions and interactions on others. Throughout the day, pupils engage socially playing with construction equipment in the main entrance hall and negotiating the use of a range of play equipment indoors and outdoors. A strength of the school is the way that pupils collaborate and support each other in their work and personally. They are respectful of each other's views and give feedback with honesty and an awareness of the feelings of others. Pupils articulate and demonstrate the skills needed for leadership and for being part of a team. They were observed working effectively in teams during games and collaborating with each other during breaktimes. In almost all lessons, pupils were observed collaborating and supporting each other as exemplified by older junior pupils who successfully produced a play in a week. Pupils regularly seek to help others and to carry out unseen acts of kindness. Older pupils speak perceptively regarding the responsibilities they have which include supporting those who are younger or new to the school. Boarders describe how school buddies give a strong welcome to newcomers as well as 'showing them the ropes'. During discussion with inspectors, pupils efficiently organised themselves into groups and collaborated well with each other when discussing their work, personal development and school life.
- 3.22 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the lives of others within the school, the local community and wider society. They have a caring and positive attitude and are keen to volunteer from helping in the classroom, taking on responsibilities within the school, such as being school councillors, to organising significant charitable events such as for the Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity. Pupils appreciate deeply the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and are extremely active in supporting others. They speak movingly regarding the reasons for sending cards to children in Ukraine and how they as a school community have been able to support and befriend those who seek asylum and shelter from war.
- 3.23 Pupils have a good understanding of their place in a world of cultural diversity. All parents who responded to the questionnaire stated that the school actively promotes values of respect and tolerance of other people. Pupils are developing a deeper understanding of the beliefs and cultures of others through assemblies, the curriculum and their wellbeing lessons. They speak with understanding regarding the reasons behind the actions of Martin Luther King Junior and understand the significance of festivals from a range of traditions, for example Sukkot from the Jewish tradition. Pupils treat one another with kindness and respect and are beginning to appreciate the importance of the language we use and the meaning of diversity and equality within modern British society.
- 3.24 Throughout the school, most pupils know how to stay safe and the importance of being physically and mentally healthy. They appreciate that their wellbeing lessons enable them to discuss a range of topics including relationships, friendships, consent, boundaries and risks including online dangers. They understand the importance of diet, exercise and a balanced lifestyle and, although they are extremely resilient and independent, they know when to seek advice or support from a trusted adult.

Inspection Evidence 13

4. Inspection Evidence

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

Inspectors

Dr Patricia Preedy Reporting inspector

Mr Jonathan Onions Compliance team inspector (Head of boarding, IAPS school)

Mrs Claire Grant Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head pastoral, IAPS school)

Mr Graham Bone Team inspector (Deputy head co-curricular, HMC and IAPS school)

Miss Katy Morgan Team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)