



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Dulwich College

November 2021

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School's Details

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|--|---|------|-------------------|-----|
| College | Dulwich College | | | |
| DfE number | 210/6000 | | | |
| Early Years registration number | EY381689 | | | |
| Registered charity number | 1150064 | | | |
| Address | Dulwich College Dulwich Common London SE21 7LD | | | |
| Telephone number | 020 8299 9252 | | | |
| Email address | enquiries@dulwich.org.uk | | | |
| Master | Dr Joseph Spence | | | |
| Chair of governors | Dr Adrian Carr | | | |
| Age range | 0 to 19 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 1884 | | | |
| | Boys | 1789 | Girls | 95 |
| | Day pupils | 1748 | Boarders | 136 |
| | EYFS | 161 | Juniors | 314 |
| | Seniors | 916 | Sixth Form | 493 |
| Inspection dates | 16 to 19 November 2021 | | | |

1. Background Information.

About the school

- 1.1 Dulwich College is a day and boarding school which is co-educational up to the age of seven and then educates male pupils up to the age of eighteen. Boarding is offered from the age of eleven. The school was founded in 1619 by Edward Alleyn and moved to its current site in 1870. The school has three sections: Ducks for children up to Year 2, incorporating the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the junior school for Years 3 to 6; and the senior school for Years 7 to 13. There are three boarding houses. The school is a registered charity, overseen by trustees, who form the governing body. Since the previous inspection the college has reviewed its curriculum; increased teaching and co-curricular links with a neighbouring school for female pupils; and introduced new management information and pastoral care systems.
- 1.2 During the period March to May 2020, the school remained open only for children of key workers. No boarders remained on site. From then until August 2020 there was a phased return for children in the EYFS and some pupils in the junior school, with some older pupils attending on a rotational basis. During this period of closure and phased return, the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.6 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.7 The school aims to ensure all pupils feel equally secure and valued and nurture a supportive community that encourages a sense of social responsibility. The school seeks to offer academic challenges that enable each pupil to realise their potential whilst providing them with sporting, cultural, charitable and adventurous engagement through which they learn to work co-operatively and lead.

About the pupils

- 1.8 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, reflecting the wider local area within a 10-mile radius of the school. The boarding community comes from over 50 different cultural and language backgrounds, including from overseas. Data supplied by the school show that pupils are of above average ability. The school has identified 289 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia and dyspraxia, 125 of whom receive additional specialist help. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 109 pupils, 51 of whom receive additional specialist help. Data used by the school have identified 338 pupils as the most able in the school's population, and the school adapts its provision to cater for them.

About the inspection

For this inspection, the DfE requested a particular focus on ISSR Part 1 (curriculum, relationships and sex education, teaching and assessment), Part 2 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) and Part 3 (welfare, health and safety) and related NMS to ensure that pupils are safeguarded effectively, that the quality of education provided fosters a culture of positive relationships and respect for protected characteristics, and that the school implements a curriculum for relationships and sex education which meets the requirements of the statutory guidance.

Details relating to this particular focus can be found at the end of the Regulatory Compliance section under the heading 'Additional information on particular areas of focus' beginning on page 9.

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, 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 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 meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, the 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 In the junior 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 2020 and 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 2020 and 2021 have confirmed 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 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.
- 2.11 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 and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.12 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 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

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

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.17 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.
- 2.18 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 **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

- 2.21 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.
- 2.22 **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

Additional information on particular areas of focus

Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2; NMS 10;] and relationships and sex education [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2A]

- 2.23 The curriculum supports the aims and ethos of the school and is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. The detailed plans take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils and do not undermine any of the fundamental British values.
- 2.24 The school delivers a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme. The school has successfully implemented the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum. In line with statutory guidance there is a planned programme, with topics covered at an appropriate age and ability level. The school covers these topics predominantly through the well-being curriculum. Statutory content is clearly and systematically provided and taught in regular lessons in the school from Years 1 to 11. This is supplemented at appropriate ages by bespoke lectures, well-being awareness events and within the physical education (PE), computing and biology curricula. In Years 12 and 13, the school plans to introduce timetabled well-being lessons in September 2022 to further strengthen the programme currently in place, which includes assemblies, lectures and small group discussions. These will be taught by tutors and are intended to provide enhanced opportunities for deeper discussion.
- 2.25 The RSE policy is on the school's website. All parents have been consulted about the school's provision and their views taken into consideration. The scheme of work is sufficiently detailed to allow pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in this area. It has flexibility which allows for changes of emphasis in order to respond to emerging issues. As a result of relevant issues raised with the DfE and in various media, topics related to tolerance and consent have been included and these are provided for effectively. At the end of each unit of work, pupils undertake an assessment scenario task and also reflect on the subject matter covered.

Quality of education provided – teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3]

- 2.26 Teaching is undertaken by the class teacher in Years 1–2 and by the form tutor in Years 3–11 as the school considers these staff to be best placed to support pupils. Inspection evidence supports this. The content and all supporting material and workbooks are planned and provided by the head of well-being who provides effective training for staff. This ensures that teaching demonstrates effective subject knowledge, is well planned, uses suitable resources and meets the aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Pupils' progress is assessed effectively to enable adjustments to be made to teaching plans. Teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; nor discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5; NMS 17]

- 2.27 Methods used throughout the school curriculum to ensure that pupils receive suitable levels of guidance in their spiritual, moral and social (SMSC) development are strong. Departmental heads reflect on curriculum content and they document in detail how different subject areas support specific elements in pupils' development. They analyse how they promote the fundamental British values within each department. This approach ensures that pupils develop their self-knowledge and distinguish right from wrong. It encourages them to accept responsibility for their behaviour and promotes respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act (2010). In particular, the school has taken specific steps to address the issues highlighted in reports in the media related to SMSC. The school has adapted content in its free learning programme and, at the core of its equality and respect agenda, developed a three-strand focus on

gender equity, LGBTQ issues and race and ethnicity. This provides effective guidance for pupils on respect for others, including those with protected characteristics.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

- 2.28 The school's safeguarding policy and arrangements meets the requirements of the statutory guidance. They are implemented effectively. There are additional related policies such as a staff code of conduct and whistleblowing as well as helpful summary documents for staff. Safeguarding incidents are all recorded with clarity and detail, all in line with statutory guidance.
- 2.29 The school keep records of any incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. These are analysed effectively to identify patterns and enable intervention to prevent abuse. Records show clear and timely action in all cases, including known incidents. They show that instances of sexual harassment are dealt with appropriately. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities liaise promptly with appropriate local safeguarding partners, including the police. Those with safeguarding responsibilities, including governors, are clear about their roles and fulfil them appropriately. They are aware of the range of support that is available to children and young people who are victims of or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour. Where appropriate, multi-agency support is always sought. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online, including how to deal with any inappropriate images that may be sent. School filtering devices and software are effective.
- 2.30 Safeguarding training is comprehensive across the school, including for all teaching and operational staff, and all visiting staff. Training includes how to understand, identify and how to respond to sexual harassment; sexual violence, including online sexual abuse; and peer-on-peer sexual abuse. There is specific training for newly appointed staff, including sports coaches and peripatetic staff. Training includes suitable guidance on the Prevent agenda. The training is delivered through various methods; some in house and some by the local authority safeguarding team. Inspection evidence confirms that staff understand the training they receive and implement it effectively. Governors have received comprehensive safeguarding training appropriate to their role. Those staff with specific safeguarding lead responsibilities all have the appropriate level of training. The pastoral leaders provide clear guidance to the staff on all matters relating to safeguarding and all training is followed up with a quiz to ensure comprehension of the requirements.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12] and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 12]

- 2.31 The behaviour and bullying policies both follow non-statutory guidance and comprehensive records are kept of both low level and more serious issues. All are dealt with appropriately and in line with policy. The school's approach to promoting good behaviour, including its use of rewards and sanctions, reinforces a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated. Pupil leaders have liaised with those in neighbouring schools to create a shared code of conduct which has been communicated to pupils. In known incidents the school has used appropriate sanctions and ensured support for both the victim and perpetrator. The school's behaviour logs and procedures are comprehensively analysed to indicate any patterns of behaviour and review of these is effective. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all pupils felt the school expects pupils to behave well. A few pupils felt the school did not adequately engage with poor behaviour and that pupils did not respect each other. Inspection evidence supports the view that occasionally pupils do not respect each other but when the school becomes aware of any poor behaviour, it is appropriately dealt with.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13;]

- 2.32 The governing body has worked closely and effectively with senior leaders in response to known issues raised in social and other media with regard to pupils' behaviour. Senior leaders held forums for

parents and strengthened opportunities for pupils to express their views. Staff training has been strengthened effectively in relevant areas and suitable changes have been made to the curriculum.

- 2.33 The leadership and management have facilitated many appropriate pupil-led initiatives to work more closely with neighbouring schools, aimed at building closer relationships from the early stages of pupils' lives at school. Several pupils commented positively that these initiatives have been interesting.
- 2.34 The leadership and management have provided a high level of support for the school community in responding to the known behavioural issues. They have shown suitable knowledge and skills in setting up appropriate initiatives. These ensure that the standards are met consistently and that pupils' well-being is promoted although it will take time for the initiatives to become fully embedded.

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.35 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.36 Leaders implement an extremely well structured curriculum that meets the relevant statutory requirements of the EYFS as well as the needs and interests of the children. It supports the children's development in the prime areas of their learning extremely well, including those with SEND and additional needs. Comprehensive monitoring practices ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively. The setting provides the highest standards of care and staff demonstrate a deep knowledge of how children of this age learn. All children under the age of two make excellent progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Due to the excellent levels of care that the setting provides, the personal and emotional development of the children is excellent. They feel safe, secure and happy. All requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are met. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and they fulfil their responsibility to protect children in their care diligently. There is evidence of a strong commitment to continuous improvement through detailed, coherent self-evaluation and a clear vision for future developments. Staff show strong commitment to ensuring that all children receive the best possible support and care. The recommendation from the previous inspection to increase the use of mathematical vocabulary in meaningful contexts during everyday activities is met.

Quality of education

- 2.37 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 2.38 The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for the development of children's communication and language, physical skills and for their personal, social and emotional development. Regular monitoring of the curriculum and the evaluation of the activities provided result in all children receiving a high level of support for their learning needs. Staff demonstrate that they have an excellent understanding of how children learn at this age. They carefully plan activities and have high expectations of what children can achieve in relation to their stage of development. These experiences allow children to explore, discover, and be curious. For example, a toddler playing in the water trays was transporting water from one tray to another using a bucket, then through gentle prompts from staff they discovered that by using a section of guttering they could do this much quicker and more easily. Children are motivated and keen to have a go at new activities and solve problems, which enables them to be effective learners. Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and take every opportunity to develop language and social skills. They read and sing with the children, encouraging them to repeat words, answer simple questions and join in with songs and actions. Staff make excellent use of the opportunities when interacting with the children, to introduce mathematical language by counting and talking to the children about shape and size. This was evident when babies used their fingers to count during a number rhyme and toddlers weighed and counted ingredients during a baking activity.
- 2.39 Regular assessments recorded on the child's electronic learning journal and tracked against the levels of development for their age, ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored and their needs are well met. This serves to identify those children who may be falling behind, enabling planning to be tailored to support them appropriately. The stimulating experiences that children receive provide them with a solid foundation on which their future learning can be built. All children, from the earliest age, are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 2.40 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.

- 2.41 Children show great enjoyment in their learning and they are very keen to explore their surroundings. They are able to choose what they want to engage with from the many resources that are readily accessible to them. These allow them to be curious and use their senses when exploring natural objects, including living herbs in the home corner. Opportunities to use and explore real everyday objects are less evident. Babies were given opportunities to test their ideas when working out how to 'post' lolly sticks into a container and explored different textures when painting a junk model person with a range of paint, brushes and rollers. Toddlers demonstrated confidence and perseverance when challenged to use tweezers to effectively pick up pom poms and transfer them into a pot, showing great delight in their achievements. Babies ably use a spoon to feed themselves and toddlers peel fruit and pour their own drinks at meal times, showing that they are developing strong skills of independence. Toddlers maintain focus on activities for appropriate periods of time, for example during singing and story time. Babies sustain high levels of concentration and show great delight as they join in with action songs and rhymes, enabling them to develop good habits for future learning.
- 2.42 Children are keen to 'have a go' for themselves and will persevere until they manage to do something. For example, a toddler tried many different ways to dress a doll, adjusting the item of clothing and manipulating the doll's limbs until he finally succeeded. Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show great respect for one another. They respond well to gentle reminders from staff about how to share things and how to play co-operatively. The children often join with whole school community initiatives such as 'STEAM' week, when babies explored mixing food colourings, and more recently 'ECO' week when toddlers used re-cycled materials for junk modelling. The setting has a highly effective partnership with parents which successfully promotes children's attendance. Suitable procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

Personal development

- 2.43 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 2.44 The exceptional relationships that children have with adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. Extremely effective care practices support children's emotional security and the development of their character, so that they feel safe, happy and secure. The nurturing key person system helps children form very secure attachments and the high standard of care given to each child promotes their well-being and independence most effectively. Staff encourage children to take appropriate risks both indoors and in the outside area. Toddlers try to do adventurous things with confidence, such as balancing on wobbly planks and tyres on a structure they had helped to build. Babies took tentative steps when negotiating the different levels and surfaces in the outdoor area. Gentle reminders, for example to stand on the mats when playing in the water tray to avoid slipping, help children to understand when they might be at risk. Risks associated with any use of technology are explained. Staff help children to lead a healthy lifestyle from the very beginning of their time at the setting. They are provided with high quality cooked food, fresh drinking water and fruit. All children have regular access to outside areas that are well equipped to promote physical activity. Toddlers join with older children for a weekly PE lesson. Hygiene practices, which are diligently followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of the children at this age are met appropriately. Staff encourage older children to understand the need for, and importance of handwashing before meals.
- 2.45 All staff give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they meet requirements for safeguarding, welfare and learning and development. Practitioners are highly effective in preparing children for life in modern Britain by enabling them to make decisions, such as choosing a book to read and deciding which particular activity to explore. As staff encourage them to share and take turns, children learn to respect and care for one another. Staff are excellent role models and consistently promote these values. They respectfully seek consent from the children before attending to their personal needs. The diversity of the community is valued and cultural events

relevant to the children in the setting are celebrated. All children are offered the same experiences. British values of fairness, tolerance and kindness towards each other underpin the setting.

Leadership and management

- 2.46 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 2.47 The strong direction from the leadership team results in an enthusiastic and strong team of staff who share an ambitious vision to provide high quality education and exemplary levels of care. They realise this through shared values, policy and practice. Leaders consistently monitor the standards of care and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained. Staff have suitably high expectations of what children under two can achieve, as well as very clear understanding of the need to support all children so that they achieve the best outcomes.
- 2.48 Staff are well qualified. Their performance is carefully monitored through annual appraisal, supported by an effective system of individual supervision meetings. These enable staff to discuss issues, including their own well-being, which is extremely important to leaders and managers. Professional development is strong with training provided for all compulsory requirements. In addition, leaders identify other training needs through evaluation and supervision meetings. This professional development has a positive impact on the care of and outcomes for children. Parents are extremely happy with the provision. They commented on the excellent care their children receive. They reported that they feel very well informed about the progress their child is making. They value opportunities to contribute to their child's learning by sharing interests and achievements from home on their child's online learning journal.
- 2.49 Leaders know the children very well and respond quickly to the needs of children, including those with SEND and additional needs. The setting can access internal specialist help when required, together with support from outside agencies. Thorough systems are in place to ensure that every child's needs are met. The needs of the setting are well known and understood by the school governors, who are highly effective in holding leaders and managers to account for the quality of care and education. They offer support and guidance and are extremely well informed about the practice and standards of the setting. High priority is given to safeguarding and the implementation of all health and safety policies to ensure that children are kept safe. They fully comply with statutory duties for example under the Equality Act 2010 and other duties in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy and safer recruitment.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.50 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Enhance children's opportunities to use real everyday objects in their play.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Key findings

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

- Pupils of all ages develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills benefitting from well-structured, engaging lessons.
- Pupils show outstanding communication skills.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent, engaging with all aspects of their education in an enthusiastic and creative way.
- Pupils enjoy success locally, nationally and internationally in an eclectic and diverse range of activities.

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

- Pupils demonstrate strong collaborative work in pursuit of common goals and shared achievements.
- Pupils show a high level of intellectual and spiritual curiosity, sparked by the wide array of innovative opportunities provided.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy, and how to stay safe.
- Pupils' moral and cultural development and their preparation for life in modern Britain is not yet consistent across all groups in the school.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- To further embed and evidence the impact of the Relationships and Sex Education programme in developing pupils' moral and cultural understanding, particularly in the upper school.

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 are high achievers in all areas of their academic lives. Pupils' attainment at A level in the years 2017–2019 was particularly strong with increases evident in the proportion of pupils awarded A* and A grades. The centre assessed and teacher-assessed grades achieved in 2020 and 2021 respectively show still further improvement with over a half of pupils gaining A* and A grades in 2020 and almost two-thirds in 2021. Results in GCSE are equally strong with most pupils gaining grades 8 and 9. Pupils benefit from the comprehensive tracking of data at all levels of the school, keeping the focus on each

individual achieving their potential, which most surpass. Junior school pupils regularly achieve a number of scholarships into the senior school, often with top grades. Within the EYFS children achieve beyond the levels expected for them across all of the early learning goals. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve at similar levels to their peers as a result of effective support. Pupils make excellent progress at all levels in relation to their abilities, benefiting from the high levels of ambition set by supportive teaching. The majority of pupils go on to study at institutions with demanding entry requirements both in the UK and abroad.

- 3.6 Pupils across the age range develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in response to well-structured and engaging teaching. They refine their competences in individual subjects supported by a strong ethos of determination, and a willingness to develop understanding and skills beyond the syllabus. For example, Year 7 chemistry pupils showed excellent understanding of particle diffusion, drawing detailed and elaborate conclusions from an experiment using tea bags in hot and cold water. Year 9 pupils develop sophisticated music skills, composing their own pieces using computer sequencers and adapting these using feedback from staff. Pupils readily use opportunities to build on each other's experiences to develop deeper and more complex understanding. Year 13 history pupils demonstrated confident and detailed knowledge of the fourth crusade, showing a secure and deep knowledge of various aspects of the period in discussion. Pupils in the junior school demonstrate a secure knowledge base and they attain high levels of understanding and skills.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills when working in groups in lessons. Pupils show they have the ability and the self-assurance to make valuable spoken contributions within lessons. They use precise language and accurate vocabulary across the curriculum, aided by teaching which supports discussion and problem solving. Spoken communication is highly developed in response to the many opportunities for developing presentation skills, such as when pupils spoke eloquently in small groups to present their ideas on personal and group responsibility for tackling climate change. The concepts they recommended had been well thought out and included evidence from research. Pupils in Year 10 communicated their presentations confidently to several hundred pupils as part of the Eco Week initiative. Pupils meticulously researched and prepared practical solutions to improve the school's sustainability profile such as to do with the school growing its own food.
- 3.8 Pupils' excellent skills are further developed through the Dulwich Diploma which has three component areas of academic study, engagement beyond the classroom and preparation for life after school, as well as through the extended project qualification (EPQ) or the school's own internally assessed extended essay. Pupils are highly engaged in the vast number of clubs and societies on offer both at lunch times and after school which contribute significantly to their high achievement. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 have well-developed language skills, exhibiting a wide vocabulary of advanced words for their age. They apply this knowledge very effectively in their writing, supported by careful scaffolding from their teachers. They knew and applied words such as 'mellow' and 'frustrated' when talking about their feelings and the feelings of others. Year 5 pupils demonstrated understanding of a wide variety of linguistic ideas during a form period, where they shared various language devices identified in their reading. Their identification, understanding and appreciation of a particular figurative device and its effect, was accurately articulated.
- 3.9 Pupils show excellent numeracy skills and apply them successfully. Pupils evidenced their extensive mathematical skills in many science, humanities and computing lessons. Pupils in Year 13 showed exceptional understanding of the application of integration in velocity calculations while pupils in Reception showed confidence in counting by making their bodies grow and shrink as they counted. Pupils in Year 1 have well-developed number skills, know their tables and are able to demonstrate that they understand the concept of an array. They can apply this knowledge to a variety of problems and the most able enjoy teaching and supporting others. In the sciences, pupils effectively used mathematical applications in a variety of novel scenarios to solve problems and present data appropriately. They did so to help solve problems on motion in physics, boiling point trends of hydrides in chemistry and when determining solution concentrations in biology.

- 3.10 Pupils develop multiple competencies in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) applications. They are highly proficient, building on their experiences of using different platforms and applications during lockdown. They successfully use portable devices supplied by the school to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum. In the junior school, pupils demonstrate excellent navigational efficiency and skill when using tablets. Pupils meticulously researched online and formatted information required in a Year 5 eco lesson and Year 3 pupils expertly produced digital cubist artwork. Pupils show high level understanding of specialist software in design and technology and sophisticated music software to support the editing of music. Children in EYFS effectively demonstrated their own learning by uploading work to the learning platform themselves. Digital ambassadors exhibit high levels of support for their peers, creating an acute awareness of online safety; they show excellent independence in organising support sessions for staff and pupils.
- 3.11 Pupils are exceptionally adept at developing learning styles that suit them individually. They have an excellent understanding of how to research effectively from an early age and use a wide range of academic sources, evaluating their reliability and developing their ability to analyse and synthesise ideas. Pupils in Year 11 evidenced exemplary skills as they collectively analysed decisions and arguments for major infrastructure spending. When discussing Wilfred Owen, pupils in Year 9 showed outstanding awareness of the importance of accessing multiple sources and avoiding potential bias to ensure that the outcome of their research was reliable. Pupils are adept in working together to synthesise information and evaluate the reliability of a wide variety of source materials. Year 7 pupils worked collaboratively with success when evaluating genuine archive resources about climate change in the Antarctic. Throughout the school, including in boarding, it is evident that pupils have well-developed study skills; they work with dedication and precision, and regularly produce work of outstanding quality. Pupils confidently elicit their own higher-level skills through active participation in extension clubs such as the national cypher challenge and chemistry club.
- 3.12 Pupils succeed at high levels beyond the classroom in response to the school's ethos that such achievement is equally valued and where the opportunity to lead is seen as a part of the learning process. Pupils support the learning of those younger than themselves, for example, Year 10 pupils worked successfully with children in Reception, planning and engaging with a group activity. Pupils' excellent intellectual curiosity stems in part from the excellent opportunities in the school's free learning programme, going beyond the constraints of the syllabus. Pupils enjoy a high level of success in the many and varied opportunities open to them outside the classroom. With over 600 music lessons taking place, some at diploma level, multiple orchestras from DUCKS to the sixth form, and regular music ensembles, the pupils perform at a high level either in school or at London venues such as Cadogan Hall, Southwark and St Paul's cathedrals. Pupils take part in an array of sports with over 800 pupils representing the school at rugby, some on academy programmes and some recent alumni playing in a professional capacity. Pupils participate in one of the 60 football teams and 42 cricket teams on offer with several gaining both regional and national success. There is a wide variety of minor sports undertaken, many with group and individual success at national level. During the inspection pupils were observed playing chess at break times, practising for the chess competitions with over 70 club members. Pupils are engaged with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, 80 at gold and 180 at silver level as well almost 300 in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the scouting movement. Pupils' skill sets are enhanced by the opportunities to become involved in the popular debating societies at various stages of their school career, with successful peers representing the country at the world schools' debating tournament.
- 3.13 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They engage with all aspects of their education in an enthusiastic and creative way. They participate in classroom discussion with fervour and coherence and work independently with ambition and purpose. Pupils show excellent levels of reflection on their attitudes to life and learning. Collaboration and team working is considered by pupils to be a key feature of being independent learners. Pupils show excellent achievement in challenges such as house competitions in music, where activities are entirely pupil led. In lessons too, pupils demonstrate determination to achieve in the face of conceptually difficult tasks. They take risks in their learning,

are unafraid to make mistakes, and are keen to edit and improve their writing. Pupils have all the attitudes and habits of highly effective learners and this is a key factor in facilitating their excellent progress. Pupils take a justified pride in their work and are determined to succeed, showing resilience when faced with challenging work.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.15 Pupils show strong self-understanding. Year 12 pupils showed that they understand their own perspectives and viewpoints in a liberal studies lesson looking at affirmative action. Pupils develop rational opinions on what is morally acceptable in terms of positive discrimination in society. Year 13 pupils exhibited self-understanding in discussing how to handle stressful matters such as examinations, university applications and coursework deadlines. Pupils talked perceptively about the importance of knowing when you have done enough, getting enough sleep and handling revision. Pupils have clear strategies for relaxation. They understand the importance of taking personal responsibility for their actions, knowing their strengths and building on them to enhance their wider learning and development. They are highly self-aware and know where to find support if they are struggling. They are keen to learn from mistakes and to understand where they have gone wrong. Pupils are self-confident and exhibit appropriately high levels of self-esteem. Boarders are clear that the boarding provision supports the development of their independence and self-confidence through social opportunities, including with girls' schools. Pupils speak with conviction and character, keen to represent themselves well.
- 3.16 Pupils show good decision making with regards to using their free time. Many spend considerable free learning time participating in the many societies and activities. Pupils understand the importance of decisions they make in relation to their academic work and pastoral well-being. The school's well-being programme is considered by pupils to have an impact on their behaviour. A few sixth-form pupils felt they would benefit from a more structured delivery of well-being topics by form tutors whilst others felt they were mature enough to gain benefit from a lecture style approach. Inspection evidence shows that the school has reviewed this and has planned appropriately. In lessons, pupils can decide how to demonstrate their understanding, such as in presentations or creative outcomes and make good use of these opportunities. They make a range of choices in the activities and free learning programmes to develop specific aspects of their character. Year 7 pupils described how choosing debating had helped to build confidence in speaking with their peers.
- 3.17 Pupils throughout the school have a strong awareness and appreciation of non-material aspects of life. Pupils in Year 5 compared and contrasted famous sculptors' methods and works effectively, appreciating aesthetic components such as 'negative space'. Pupils in Year 6 effectively understood diverse genres of dance. Pupils show innate sensitivity in recognising and understanding the value of the diversity around them. Pupils in the junior school engage enthusiastically in group worship, singing with fulfilment as a community. Children in Reception focused well on the importance of not picking leaves off the trees, enabling them to keep growing as living things. Year 13 pupils spoke with maturity and depth on some of the problems of organised religion throughout human history. Pupils' intellectual and spiritual curiosities are sparked by the innovative free learning programme.
- 3.18 Pupils are able to distinguish right from wrong. They are equipped with the skills and the maturity to deal with situations in which they perceive their peers are not treated well although this is not always the case. Pupils explained that it is their responsibility to lead each other in developing suitable respect systems and moral codes. Pupils in Year 4 develop moral understanding through Eco Week seminars in which they discover how individual action can improve the lives of others. Pupils work effectively together to implement initiatives they could take to help others such as assessing how different forms of fundraising can be effective for the maximum benefit of those in poorer countries. Most pupils spoken to during the inspection could articulate moral decisions relating to consent. Mostly they

distinguished between friendly, non-threatening talk and actions and behaviour which should be challenged as threatening or harassment. In questionnaire responses, a few pupils felt that the school does not sort out poor behaviour. Inspection evidence shows that staff act promptly and in line with its policies. A very few pupils commented that perpetrators of poor behaviour seem to be prioritised, over and above justice for victims and felt that better restorative practice is needed to improve the culture of the school. Some pupils felt that the school's recent measures to improve behaviour were compromised by the unconscious attitudes of their peers. Inspectors found that the action taken by the school is designed to discourage such experiences for pupils in the future. Inspection evidence shows the school to have developed effective behavioural strategies in response to issues of poor behaviour but shows that these are not yet fully embedded.

- 3.19 Pupils demonstrate strong collaboration in pursuit of common goals and shared achievements. Pupils exhibit strong social development skills which have been enhanced through 'symposium' days, during which they interact with pupils from a neighbouring girls' school. These have enabled pupils to realise and appreciate that barriers to communication and interaction need not exist and can be broken down. Pupils work confidently with each other across genders and become aware and respectful of each other's differences. Pupils work collaboratively within and across year groups where COVID restrictions allow. Year 9 pupils showed good teamwork within a free learning day to construct the chassis of a go-kart and fit a petrol motor. Pupils in DUCKS are extremely well developed socially and enjoy working with others. Their co-operation is excellent and worked to good effect when moving logs in the woodland. Across the year groups pupils are active collaborators and team working is considered a key feature of being an independent learner. Pupils show a high level of achievement in challenges such as house music competitions, where activities are entirely pupil led.
- 3.20 Pupils are respectful and thoughtful about the needs of others who are less fortunate. Pupils undertake a wide range of responsibilities very sensibly and with great pride. Prefects carry out their duties diligently and develop excellent leadership skills which prepare them extremely well to be responsible citizens of the future. Pupils are keen to contribute positively to the lives of others, in school and the community and around the world. Pupils are interested in a wide range of partnerships which exist with local schools and through links with schools internationally. Pupils proudly announced in a climate change conference how the school's linked international schools are trying to become carbon neutral. Younger pupils worked together to construct and organise a working food bank as a contribution to harvest festival. Boarders consider that making positive contributions to others is a well-rooted part of their culture. Inspection evidence supports this view. Junior boarders describe close and positive relationships with older prefects. International boarders regularly support others in developing languages such as Mandarin.
- 3.21 Pupils develop effective understanding of other cultures and diversity, supported by the school's well-being programme but this is not consistent across all groups of pupils. Pupils feel that they have opportunities to discuss and raise related questions confidentially. Year 8 pupils talked articulately about the Black Lives Matter movement and Windrush issues. Year 12 pupils showed well-developed understanding of diversity and race when analysing moral arguments for and against affirmative action. Pupils in the junior school identified prominent local figures as diversity role models, such as the mayor of London and female authors. In Year 9, pupils inspired by the work of the artist Wangechi Mutu produced strong work inspired by her representation of the female body. Pupils consider themselves to be tolerant, whilst acknowledging that their frame of reference concerning respect and sensitivity to difference and diversity is not always completely secure. A few pupils with protected characteristics described feeling marginalised, with experiences of intolerance contributing to this feeling. The school's recent changes to its behaviour provision are designed to address this.
- 3.22 Pupils throughout the school exhibit a secure understanding of how to keep themselves both physically and mentally healthy. Pupils develop their understanding and practices of healthy living as they progress through the school. Pupils in Year 6 engage readily with the opportunities provided for meditation and enjoy them. Pupils in the junior school swimming squad demonstrated both stamina

and fitness alongside technical skill. Pupils in Year 1 have a very good understanding of what makes a healthy meal and how important it is to make healthy choices such as selecting fruit after their lunch. They have strategies to manage their feelings and they understand the need for plenty of sleep and exercise to keep their minds and bodies healthy. Boarders respond well to active encouragement to pursue healthy lifestyles through the provision of fresh fruit and other healthy snacks in the houses each day and a variety of social sports and activities at the weekend. Sixth formers have a well-developed awareness of the need to be physically healthy, playing sports, visiting the gym and eating well. Pupils have a very secure knowledge of how to keep safe online and in the wider world with strong support from the pastoral and tutor teams in operation across all age groups.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended 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

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| Miss Sue Duff | Reporting inspector |
| Mr Desmond Dunne | Additional Reporting inspector |
| Mr Ben Sandford Smith | Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school) |
| Mr John Davis | Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school) |
| Mrs Samantha Gibbons | Team inspector (Head, GSA school) |
| Mr Richard Lynn | Team inspector (Head, ISA school) |
| Mr Patrick Mason | Team inspector (Director of studies, IAPS school) |
| Mr Steven Pearce | Team inspector (Head of faculty, HMC school) |
| Mr Henry Rickman | Team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school) |
| Mr John Davis | Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school) |
| Mrs Valerie Holloway | Co-ordinating inspector for early years |
| Mrs Jane Sheppard | Team inspector for EYFS (Head of lower school, IAPS school) |