



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

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

**Eton College**

**December 2021**

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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Eton College		
<b>DfE number</b>	868/6016		
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1139086		
<b>Address</b>	Eton College Eton Windsor Berkshire SL4 6DW		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 370100		
<b>Email address</b>	headmaster@etoncollege.org.uk		
<b>Head Master</b>	Mr Simon Henderson		
<b>Provost</b>	The Lord Waldegrave of North Hill		
<b>Age range</b>	12 to 19		
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	1341		
	<b>Day pupils</b>	0	<b>Boarders</b> 1341
	<b>Seniors</b>	798	<b>Sixth Form</b> 543
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 November to 3 December 2021		

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Eton College, located on the outskirts of Windsor, Berkshire, is a boarding school for male pupils. It was founded in 1440 by King Henry VI as 'The Kynge's College of Our Ladye of Eton besyde Windesore' to provide free education to 70 poor scholars. All pupils board in one of the 25 boarding houses sited throughout the town, each overseen by a housemaster and a dame. The school's governing body comprises the provost, the vice-provost and 10 fellows. The provost is resident at Eton and acts as the chair of governors. The vice-provost is also resident.
- 1.2 Since the previous regulatory compliance inspection in March 2019, the school has completed various building works including a dedicated computer science suite, a fully equipped leadership building and a redevelopment of the science building. The leadership team has expanded to include a newly created role of director of safeguarding.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school setting was closed to Eton pupils, although the school provided classrooms for children of key workers from local primary schools. No boarders remained on site. During this period of closure, the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.5 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.6 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable children and the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home. Overseas boarders that did not return home received remote learning at the home of their guardians.
- 1.7 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.8 The school aims to promote the best habits of independent thought and learning in the pursuit of excellence; to provide a broadly based education designed to enable all pupils to discover their strengths; to enable pupils to make the most of their talents within the school and beyond; to engender respect for individuality, difference, the importance of teamwork and the contribution that each pupil makes to the life of the school and the community; to support pastoral care that nurtures physical and mental health, emotional maturity and spiritual richness; and to foster self-confidence, enthusiasm, perseverance, tolerance and integrity.

### About the pupils

- 1.9 Eton is academically selective, and standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the school is well above average on entry and above average in the sixth form for those pupils taking the tests. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. Most are from the UK; a very small minority attend from the USA, Europe and Asia. The school has identified 201 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or difficulties with attention, all of whom receive

additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupil requires support in English as an additional language in order to access the curriculum.

### **About the inspection**

- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 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. 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](#).

**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 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2018 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level and pre-U results in the years 2018 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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**

- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 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**

- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

#### **PART 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.16 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.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

#### **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

- 2.18 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.
- 2.19 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**

- 2.20 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.
- 2.21 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]**

- 2.22 The school has been extremely thorough in implementing its programme of relationships and sex education (RSE). Implementation followed a lengthy period of consultation with parents and staff. The programme, which has been integrated into the existing personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) syllabus, fully covers the content outlined in the government's statutory guidance for RSE. The PSHEE programme pays particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. Parents have had the opportunity to find out more about the programme through an online webinar and can access the RSE policy on the school's website. Pupils attend a series of PSHEE/RSE lectures delivered by experts in their field. Lectures are always followed by discussions in tutorial groups which offer pupils the opportunity to discuss and explore issues in greater depth within a trusted setting of six or seven pupils. The programme is enhanced by assemblies, additional workshops and seminars. Pupils have also led relevant talks in chapel. To assist teaching, the co-ordinator for RSE has prepared extensive and detailed follow-up materials for tutors and a handbook for pupils which provide key questions for discussion and links to a wide range of other relevant material. Pupils' understanding is assessed regularly through questionnaires or specific tasks. Pupils speak highly of the programme; they say that the lectures are interesting and informative, and they particularly value the opportunity for discussion in small groups.
- 2.23 The programme has covered topics of immediate relevance and dealt with issues which have been prominent in the media, such as racism, healthy relationships and sex, sexism, misogyny and pornography. Pupils are asked for feedback, and the programme is kept under constant review, which includes consideration of pupils' comments. Modifications to the original programme have been implemented this term and further improvements are planned for September 2022. From that date, as well as a continuing programme of lectures and tutorials, all pupils will receive a weekly PSHEE lesson taught by a small group of specially trained staff.

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

- 2.24 The teaching shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils. It provides pupils with sufficient time to explore topics in depth and engage in meaningful discussions. 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. It does not 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]**

- 2.25 The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Many pupils and staff commented during the inspection that the school had become a much kinder, more tolerant and more respectful place in recent years. The change is due to the direction provided by the school's senior leadership and the governing body to address issues such as homophobia, misogyny and racism. This has been done through the school's PSHEE programme and through engaging with national organisations dedicated to changing ingrained perceptions and prejudices. The leadership's intent is seen in the appointment of a director of inclusion education, supported by an inclusion education officer, and the way it has openly sought to develop pupils' understanding of issues such as sexual harassment, sexual violence, online sexual abuse and peer-on-peer sexual abuse. Governors, staff and pupils have been trained to identify, to understand and to respond to such issues. The role of housemasters, dames and tutors, and the courage to have frank and open discussions have been instrumental in bringing about change and helping pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The school has successfully taken specific steps to address the issues highlighted over the last year in reports in various media.

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

- 2.26 The school takes all matters to do with safeguarding extremely seriously, to notable effect. The school's leaders and the governing body have signalled the importance of safeguarding through the appointment of highly experienced staff in the field, including a full-time director of safeguarding, who acts as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). In addition, there are six deputy DSLs. All members of staff receive regular safeguarding training and show effective understanding of the training they have received. They are aware of who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure and also that they can make a referral to children's services if necessary. All members of the leadership team, all housemasters and dames, and members of the governing body have undertaken advanced safeguarding training. Staff and governors have been trained effectively to understand, identify and know how to respond to sexual harassment; sexual violence, including online sexual abuse; and peer-on-peer sexual abuse.
- 2.27 The school's safeguarding policy is supplemented by additional policies which outline, for example, the code of conduct for staff, whistleblowing procedures, and safer recruitment of staff. Policy and procedures are subject to annual review by the governing body. Detailed safeguarding records are maintained by a newly appointed full-time safeguarding co-ordinator. The school keeps suitable records and analyses instances of alleged sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse. Records show clear and timely action and immediate liaison with appropriate local safeguarding partners. Effective communication is maintained with parents. Pupils receive guidance on staying safe and show understanding of what they have been taught. They state that they receive a response and the school takes action where necessary when they express concerns.
- 2.28 The school has rigorous procedures for checking the suitability of staff and, where referral criteria are met, makes appropriate provision to report any person whose services are no longer used to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA). Leaders have liaised effectively with local safeguarding partners and have been scrupulous in dealing with allegations against staff which have arisen since the previous inspection.
- 2.29 The school works effectively with its local safeguarding partners and is aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims of or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour. The DSL seeks advice and support from the local authority and acts appropriately following any incidents. The school's safeguarding team ensures that it places the safety of the pupils at the centre of all its interactions with outside agencies. The school understands that the police should be informed immediately following any criminal offence and that it should not carry out its own investigations.
- 2.30 In their response to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils said they feel safe in the school, and a similar proportion of parents expressed the view that the school safeguards their children effectively. The findings of the inspection agree with these views.

**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 Almost every pupil who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the school expects them to behave well. This indicates that the messages and guidance conveyed through chapel, assemblies, PSHEE sessions, tutorials and other means are highly effective. A very small minority of pupils indicated in their response to the questionnaire that pupils are not always kind and respectful to each other. Incidents recorded in behaviour logs support these views, but the incidence of poor behaviour proportionately is very small. During the inspection, inspectors spoke to well over a quarter of the pupils, and the overwhelming view conveyed by them was that the ethos of the school is one of kindness and respect, where occasional transgressions are dealt with effectively through appropriate sanctions. These views support the inspection findings that the school has developed a

culture where sexual harassment, online sexual abuse, misogyny, inappropriate language and disrespectful behaviour to those with protected characteristics are not tolerated. The incidence of bullying is minimal and, where it does occur, effective support is provided for both victim and perpetrator.

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

2.32 The school's leaders and the governing body had taken decisive and effective action well before issues of sexual abuse were reported in different media. They have maintained concerted action since then to ensure that a culture of openness, fairness, tolerance and respect pervades every house. They have invited a range of expert bodies to assist with their drive to improve the culture of the school. They have liaised productively with local girls' schools. They have communicated openly and honestly with parents, former pupils, staff and current pupils with regard to known incidents. They have commissioned a separate race survey, re-examined the school's provision for PSHEE and ensured full implementation of RSE in line with statutory requirements.

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

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

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

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

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

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
F Block	Year 9
E Block	Year 10
D Block	Year 11
C Block	Year 12
B Block	Year 13

#### Key findings

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

- Pupils' intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for learning enable them to achieve exceptional GCSE, A-level and Pre-U examination results in response to high-quality teaching and critical feedback.
- Pupils develop communication skills, mathematical competence, and knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects which are far beyond the levels expected for their age.
- Pupils make excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning and a means of organising their work across all subjects.
- Pupils combine their academic success with the pursuit of a wide range of other interests, often at an extremely high level, as a result of the school's extraordinarily rich programme of co-curricular activities.

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

- Pupils display extremely high levels of self-confidence, self-discipline, self-knowledge and resilience, and an excellent understanding of how to improve their own achievement.
- The pupils' moral development and the way they respect and value diversity and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to others are excellent.
- Pupils show outstanding social awareness and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school, the local community and the world beyond.
- Pupils are well-behaved, courteous, thoughtful, supportive of each other and value highly the safe and friendly boarding environment which contributes so much to their personal development.

## Recommendations

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:
- ensuring that every pupil receives the recognition due for their achievements and is made to feel a valued member of the school community;
  - ensuring more equitable catering arrangements across all houses so that pupils can put into practice their understanding of a healthy diet.

## 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 is highly successful in fulfilling its aim to promote the best habits of independent thought and learning in the pursuit of excellence. This is reflected in exceptional results in GCSE, A-level and Pre-U examinations since the previous inspection. Pupils attribute their success to the high level of challenge provided by the teaching they receive, which extends them well beyond the dictates of examination syllabi. The positive views expressed by a very large majority of parents and pupils in response to the pre-inspection questionnaires in relation to pupils' academic and other achievements are fully justified by the findings of the inspection.
- 3.6 In GCSE examinations in 2018 and 2019, the very large majority of results were at the highest two grades or equivalent, and well over half at the very highest level. The centre- and teacher-assessed grades awarded in 2020 and 2021 maintained this very high level of attainment. In the sixth form, pupils' attainment was consistently high in 2018 and 2019, with over three-quarters of the results being awarded grade A or A\* at A level and distinction in Pre-U examinations in modern foreign languages, history, music and English literature. The centre- and teacher-assessed grades awarded in 2020 and 2021 maintained this strong record, improving on the proportion who achieved A\* at A level and at the highest level of distinction in Pre-U. Even when the high level of ability when pupils enter the school is taken into account, the results at GCSE and A level represent excellent progress. Pupils with SEND also make excellent progress in line with their peers as a result of the additional support they receive. The pupils' excellent achievement and progress are not only evident in the school's examination results. They can also be seen clearly in the breadth and depth of their intellectual curiosity, revealed when they discuss their work, in the work itself, and in their intelligent and perceptive contributions in lessons. The pupils are very well prepared academically for the next stage in their education. Almost all pupils achieve offers of places at universities or similar institutions in the UK, the USA and worldwide which have very high selective entry requirements.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding far beyond the levels expected for their age. For example, a group of pupils developed a scholarly and detailed paper on the economic and health benefits of passive air filters in Northern India. Pupils' overt intellectual curiosity, their extensive background knowledge, their desire to clarify anything they do not understand, their strong linguistic skills and their excellent recall of prior knowledge and understanding help them to excel. At every turn, pupils demonstrate highly proficient ability. This may be in analysing and dissecting Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech, engaging in intellectual discussion about rationality and irrationality or debating the social, cultural and political context of Büchner's *Woyzeck*. They are able to critique Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* expertly, apply their knowledge of Kant to practical business models or demonstrate advanced skills of composition in music. Pupils develop and enhance their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, social, physical, aesthetic and creative education not only in lessons but also through participating in myriad extra-curricular activities. For example, a STEM symposium inspired the development of a sophisticated extra-curricular project on the relative strengths of wind turbine blades and the methodology needed to calculate this. Pupils commented that there is no 'spoon-feeding' in teaching and that they are expected to prepare thoroughly for lessons and to be academically ambitious.

- 3.8 The pupils' communication and mathematical skills are of the highest order and are applied extremely well across different areas of learning. Pupils are articulate and speak with confidence in front of others. They listen carefully to what others have to say and give thoughtful and relevant responses. Scholastic dialogue is at the heart of the classroom experience. Listening skills are taught actively in PSHEE. Numerous theatre productions, including productions chosen, directed and produced by pupils, contribute to their ability to communicate and present effectively. Their written work shows a highly proficient command of language, and the quality of essays in subjects such as English, theology and history is outstanding, with teachers' detailed feedback leading to significant progress. Pupils produce high-quality publications in many departments. They read with insight, extracting relevant information and understanding what the author really means. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate levels of skill far above those normally expected for their age, showing mastery in different year groups of topics such as differential equations, graphical data, circle geometry, trigonometry and probability trees. Their work is well organised. At the highest level, exceptional research by individuals on topics such as Zorn's lemma and the Cantor set are at university levels of achievement. Pupils' linguistic and mathematical skills are honed through the many opportunities for discussion and formal presentation in class, but also by the many extra-curricular opportunities. In areas such as debating, public speaking, essay writing competitions, poetry recitations, junior, intermediate and senior mathematics challenges and Olympiads pupils demonstrate the highest levels of success.
- 3.9 The school leaders' decision to equip every pupil and member of staff with a tablet computer in 2019 has had a profound impact on the development of pupils' ICT skills and the way these are used as tools for learning in every subject. By the time periods of remote learning were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, the pupils already had the skills to use technology highly effectively. They use their tablet computers with consummate ease. Throughout the school, pupils are proficient in using generic word processing, spreadsheet, presentational and organisational software and in using ICT for research purposes. In certain subjects, pupils are highly competent in using subject-related software. In music, for example, pupils use composition software effectively and in design and technology demonstrate proficient use of computer-aided design software. An ICT course for all pupils in Year 9 ensures that all pupils develop the necessary skills to make the best use of ICT, and those who take computer science at GCSE and A level attain very high standards.
- 3.10 Foremost among the many factors which contribute to pupils' excellent progress and very high standards is the high quality of the teaching they receive. Throughout the school, scholarship is valued by both pupils and staff, pupils respond to excellent effect to expectations which are high, and teaching which is typically full of challenge. Pupils are motivated by teaching which displays a passion for individual subjects and high levels of expertise, both in terms of subject knowledge and of how to communicate this effectively to pupils. Critical feedback is seen as an essential part of the learning process, and pupils respond readily to expectations to revisit work to improve it, to ask questions when they are unsure and to engage in discussion with staff about their progress. Pupils commented that staff are always available and approachable to give extra one-to-one support. Pupils benefit greatly from a curriculum that encourages independent learning, the development of research skills and the ability to structure arguments and produce extended writing of the highest quality. Pupils gain much from being encouraged to take a topic and conduct further investigation themselves to develop their understanding and breadth of knowledge. They also benefit from excellent resources, many departmental libraries and the opportunity to work with rare books, artefacts and natural history specimens from the school's own museums.
- 3.11 The school's aim to provide an education which enables all pupils to discover their strengths and to make the most of their talents is fully realised through an extraordinary range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which complement and enrich pupils' academic studies. At the highest level, pupils achieve: national success in a variety of sports such as cricket, rowing, rackets, tennis and fencing; places in national youth orchestras and the finals of national music competitions; and academic recognition in many subjects. However, it is the huge range of opportunities afforded to all pupils which enables them to acquire new skills and interests and to develop into multi-talented young

people. By the time he leaves the school, a typical pupil will have achieved competence in a variety of sports through representing school and house. He will have developed musical ability through attendance at music lessons and the opportunity to participate in the more than 50 ensembles and groups averaging three concerts a week. He may have developed acting ability through participation in the many school and house drama productions. And he will certainly have developed a broad range of interests through participation in the more than 70 pupil-led societies such as agriculture, architecture, broadcasting, chess, comedy, engineering, environmental action, fashion, journalism, linguistics, motorsport, mountaineering and ornithology. The boarding environment contributes hugely to pupils' achievement, allowing a structured day which avoids major clashes between sporting and music activities and offers a wide range of activity outside formal lesson times. The school leadership's commitment to engaging professional coaches and support staff and investing in first-class facilities is also a major contributory factor to pupils' wide-ranging achievements. Many pupils combine the highest academic achievement with, for example, learning to play a musical instrument or participating in drama productions to a very high standard.

- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to work are exceptional. Pupils show a strong desire to learn, take pride in their work, and are engaged and focused. They develop an excellent range of study skills. They are happy to work independently, showing perseverance, but equally to discuss and debate with others. They develop the ability to synthesise, analyse and hypothesise, and learn to think for themselves and use their initiative. The need to balance their academic work with involvement in so many activities enables almost all pupils to develop excellent organisational skills, manage demanding workloads and meet deadlines. The mutual respect between pupils and their tutors and between pupils and their peers promotes rapid learning and ensures there is an enthusiastic approach towards the acquisition of knowledge.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 The school's leaders and governing body have been highly successful in building a community which provides pupils with rich opportunities to develop significant personal qualities. Pupils are enabled to engage in a wide range of activities which contribute to their all-round personal development through the highly effective encouragement and support they gain from boarding and, in particular, the housemasters, dames and tutors. The school is a vibrant, active community which develops pupils' personal skills and qualities to the very highest level. The inspection findings are entirely consistent with the extremely positive views expressed by the very large majority of parents and the large majority of pupils in response to all questions relating to pupils' personal development on the pre-inspection questionnaires.
- 3.15 Pupils' self-confidence, self-discipline, self-knowledge and resilience are exceptional, as shown by the ways they rise to the challenges and opportunities provided by at the school and by the degrees of initiative and autonomy they demonstrate. These qualities, their understanding of how to improve their own performance and their ability to make decisions prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their lives. Pupils readily engage with adults and visiting speakers. This was evident in a late-evening event when many pupils in an audience of over 200 were eager to pose challenging, pertinent and well-informed questions of a former government minister. Pupils develop self-discipline and self-esteem through constructive and intelligent responses to the school's challenging teaching style and they enjoy mastering new subject areas and academic skills.
- 3.16 The pupils are ambitious to do well and develop a clear understanding of how to improve their own learning, helped by the detailed and critical feedback they receive. Pupils learn not only to prioritise and make decisions, but to discover new interests and find their niche. They strike a healthy balance when combining academic work and extra-curricular activity. They attribute the development of these important personal qualities to the many situations in which they find their skills and qualities are

tested, such as having to fulfil positions of responsibility, speaking in front of others, and trying out new activities and approaches to their work. Pupils appreciate the advice provided by staff and outside speakers which helps them to make important decisions about university applications and future career choices.

- 3.17 A very small minority of pupils lack the self-esteem which is evident in the very large majority. Even though they, too, are achieving at a very high level, a few pupils talked of feeling under-valued or of feeling overwhelmed when trying to balance, for example, the demands of extra-curricular rehearsal schedules with academic work. The school recognises such pressures and provides free and discreet access to the school's well-being centre or to a team of counsellors and chaplains in addition to daily oversight by pastoral staff. Many pupils are helped in this way, but not every pupil struggling with feelings of inadequacy is identified or feels valued.
- 3.18 The pupils' moral development is excellent, including the way they respect and value diversity and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions. The school amply fulfils its aim of engendering respect for individuality, difference and the importance of teamwork. On an intellectual level, pupils engage keenly and with understanding in debates on morality, such as in discussing China's one-child policy or gender inequality and sexism in nineteenth-century paintings. They respond with equal alacrity, and also outrage, at examples of unacceptable sexual behaviour of male pupils towards females highlighted recently in various media. On a global scale, they react similarly to the inequality between first- and third-world countries. Pupils acknowledge that relevant issues have been covered extensively in the school's PSHEE programme, through talks in chapel and assemblies and lectures from visiting speakers. They have appreciated the insights they have gained. On a practical level, this has resulted in pupils who show great respect for others, regardless of background, culture, tradition or sexual orientation. Amongst the older pupils, many commented that views in these areas had changed markedly over their time in the school. They felt the school to be a much happier, more tolerant and accepting place than when they first joined. The school's leaders have done much to bring about this change in attitudes. Instances of poor behaviour are rare and are dealt with effectively. Overwhelmingly, pupils are well behaved, courteous, respectful and thoughtful, and they accept full responsibility for their own behaviour.
- 3.19 Pupils are outstandingly socially aware and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school, the local community and the world beyond. The fact that every pupil is a boarder contributes significantly to their social development. Pupils develop passionate loyalty to their house and work together to ensure both its smooth running and success in inter-house competitions. Within the classroom, pupils collaborate effectively with their peers and staff, showing genuine interest in others' achievements and points of view. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 take the opportunity to join the 'Social Impact Forum' engaging in guided volunteering opportunities at day centres for the elderly or in local schools where they mentor pupils in some academic subjects. In Year 12, all pupils serve either through the combined cadet force or join a weekly placement within the local community. By Year 13, pupils often develop their own projects in the service of the local community and wider society. Some pupils provide practical support for the homeless in the local community while others have worked with mentors helping those who have been imprisoned due to involvement in gangs. The pandemic has inevitably restricted activities, but pupils have continued to create diverse opportunities online. They have walked, run, swum and cycled to raise awareness of others' needs and generate funds. Within the school, boys contribute by organising societies, running committees and advisory groups where pupils from all year groups work collaboratively to solve shared goals or contribute to whole-school research. Older pupils act as prefects, contribute to year-group assemblies and mentor younger pupils.
- 3.20 The pupils' spiritual development, though somewhat understated and less clearly defined than other aspects of their personal development, is nevertheless evident in many aspects of school life. This fulfils the school's aim to nurture emotional maturity and spiritual richness. Pupils from many different backgrounds and faiths feel equal and at home within the school. As well as the school's Anglican chapel, a significant number of pupils attend services and meetings for diverse faith groups. Pupils are



reverential at such times and, by the time they reach the sixth form, the large majority show great appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on spiritual matters at the start of the day in chapel. On such occasions pupils participate wholeheartedly, for example through rousing singing. In many different fora, such as PSHEE tutorials and the philosophical discussion society, pupils relish the opportunity to discuss philosophical questions. The number of pupils opting for examined courses in theology, politics, philosophy and ethics attests to their interest in the non-material aspects of life. In addition, the large numbers of pupils engaging with the arts indicates pupils' appreciation and enjoyment of activities which are spiritual in nature.

- 3.21 The pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and how to be physically and mentally healthy. Pupils display remarkable balance and equanimity physically and mentally considering their drive to achieve the highest academic standards whilst being involved in such a wide range of activities. The school's PSHEE programme contributes significantly to pupils' understanding of health and well-being. As a result, pupils are fully aware of the dangers associated with the online world. There are systems in place to monitor and regulate access to digital devices at night-time and ensure pupils get sufficient sleep, although some pupils feel that the different expectations in this area between houses are somewhat unfair. Pupils have a thorough understanding of safeguarding and the routes through which they can report concerns. The large majority of pupils maintain good physical health through their participation in formal and informal physical activities. Pupils also have a well-informed understanding of the components of a healthy diet although, in their questionnaire responses, a quarter of pupils responded negatively to the school's provision in this area. The many comments on this matter highlighted the difference between meals provided in the school's central dining facility, and those in the 14 houses which cater for pupils' meals. Pupils in the latter said they cannot put into practice their understanding of a healthy diet as there is often insufficient fruit and vegetables. Inspectors took meals with pupils in every house and confirmed the variations highlighted by the pupils.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the provost and vice-provost, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings, tutorials, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited all 25 boarding houses and 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

Mr Graham Sims	Reporting inspector
Mrs Serena Alexander	Accompanying reporting inspector
Dr Ruth Weeks	Compliance team inspector (Former headmistress, HMC school)
Mr Colin Gunning	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Richard Jones	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, SofH school)
Mr Thierry Lauze	Team inspector for boarding (Assistant head, HMC school)
Mrs Karen Pickles	Team inspector for boarding (Former senior housemistress, HMC school)
Mr Jonathan Shaw	Team inspector for boarding (Head, HMC school)
Mr John White	Team inspector (Director of Sixth Form, HMC school)