



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Exeter School

December 2021

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School's Details

School	Exeter School			
DfE number	878/6033			
Registered charity number	1093080			
Address	Exeter School Victoria Park Road Exeter Devon EX2 4NS			
Telephone number	01392 258712			
Email address	head@exeterschool.org.uk			
Head	Ms Louise Simpson			
Chair of governors	Mr James Gaisford			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	943			
	Juniors	194	Seniors	540
	Sixth Form	209		
Inspection dates	7 to 10 December 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Exeter School is an independent co-educational day school. It is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. Situated in 25 acres of land, the school was founded in 1633 and has occupied its present site since 1880. A preparatory school has been on site since the early 1900s, and in 2000 this became Exeter Junior School. Since the previous inspection, the school appointed a new head in August 2020.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. During this period of closure, 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 vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home.
- 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.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.6 Exeter School seeks to develop the academic, personal and physical potential of each pupil and to uphold the highest standards of academic teaching and pastoral care. It aims to sustain a rich and varied extra-curricular provision; to promote high expectations of pupil conduct within a friendly, tolerant and safe environment; and encourage pupils to contribute to the wider community.

About the pupils

- 1.7 Pupils come predominantly from professional families living within a 20-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 190 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include cognitive learning difficulties, all of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 13 pupils, whose needs are met by their classroom teachers.

About the inspection

- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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 8.

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. 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. 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](#).

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

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 2017 to 2019, 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 2017 to 2019 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.
- 2.9 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 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 The school's safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively in most areas, including liaison with external agencies to meet the needs of those pupils at risk or in particular need. However, the school's recruitment arrangements do not pay sufficient regard to the statutory guidance contained in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) September 2021, when carrying out the checks to be completed before staff take up an appointment. Most pre-employment checks are in place and recorded as required. However, the school cannot show that it has consistently obtained and recorded references as required.
- 2.12 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraph 6 and 8–16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but those in paragraph 7 [safeguarding] are not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that all required checks on staff are completed before a person begins work, in particular it must obtain and suitably record references, having regard to the guidance contained in KCSIE [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

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.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] 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.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] 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.
- 2.18 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is 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.
- 2.20 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 The proprietor does not ensure 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.

2.22 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.**Action point 2**

The school must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities use their skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to promote the well-being of pupils and so ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

Additional information on particular areas of focus**Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2]**

- 2.23 The curriculum is supported by appropriate long- and medium-term plans and schemes of work. These take into account the age-appropriate nature of the curriculum for pupils in the junior, senior and sixth-form phases of the school, so that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. They are devised by class teachers and leaders in the junior school and subject and pastoral leaders in the senior school. The school has an effective programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) which reflects the school's aim and ethos and encourages respect for other people effectively, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.
- 2.24 Secondary-age pupils are provided with access to up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner; enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential. Sixth-form pupils engage in a programme that effectively supports their aspirations for the world of work and university entrance. Pupils in both the junior and senior school receive effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

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

- 2.25 The relevant schemes of work include all of the requirements outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance for relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education (RSE) in the senior school. The recently revised policy for both junior and senior schools is available to parents on the school's website. In drawing up the policy and schemes of work, the school has consulted pupils, parents and staff, taking their views into consideration. The programme is designed so that topics are revisited in subsequent years to develop a deeper understanding. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE in so far as they are lawfully excused. The science curriculum also includes content on human development, including reproduction, from which there is no right to withdraw. Requests for withdrawal may be made directly to senior leaders.
- 2.26 The relationships education in the junior school and the RSE curriculum in the senior school are taught effectively through PSHE, science and religious education, through timetabled lessons, assemblies and specific topics. Medical staff also support the delivery of RSE where appropriate. Regular visiting speakers and organisations are also involved in teaching of RSE, working with individual year groups to discuss age-appropriate topics and issues. The school has responded effectively to reports in various media with regard to aspects of sexualised behaviour and curriculum content is effectively designed to improve pupils' understanding of such areas.

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

- 2.27 Teaching throughout the school is well matched to pupils' needs. School leaders and managers have a suitable programme in place to check whether teaching provides suitable challenge for the aptitude and ability of the pupils, including the promotion of higher-order thinking skills. Teachers use resources effectively. Provision of information and communication technology (ICT) has been

strengthened across the school with associated professional development for staff. Specialised subject specific resources, such as in science, art, music and physical education are used effectively.

- 2.28 Teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in and across subjects. Pupils' self-motivation, their application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves is fostered in teaching and documented in the school magazine. Well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time are clearly outlined in the school's schemes of work and implemented effectively. The school's own assessment data, lesson observations, pupil interviews and work scrutiny show that teaching demonstrates a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils. These are taken into account in the planning of lessons. Teaching demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and the effective utilisation of a good quantity and range of classroom resources which are of good quality. This was supported by an overwhelming majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire and agreed that teachers know their subject well. A regular and thorough framework for assessment is in place which demonstrates how information is used to plan teaching so that pupils can progress. Staff utilise effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly. The taught curriculum 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 and does not discriminate against pupils, as required by Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

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

- 2.29 The school's documentation and scheme of work confirms that suitable principles and values, linked to the schools aims, are actively promoted. These facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law abiding citizens. This takes place through taught PSHE lessons, chapel, assemblies, house meetings, science, off-site trips and visits, and mindfulness sessions in both junior and senior school. Pupils are gaining knowledge, self-awareness and life skills through the developing programmes of PSHE, including RSE. Whilst some of this work is in its early stages, evidence shows that pupils are already benefiting from the changes.
- 2.30 The large majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire reported that classmates and other pupils are kind and respect each other. During interviews, pupils spoke of the general atmosphere amongst pupils being very accepting in a respectful manner. This confirms the amiable nature of relationships within the school. Pupils demonstrate appropriate regard for those with protected characteristics, as well as good relationships with well-being ambassadors and prefects. The inaugural school council, that took place during the inspection, outlined how it will provide greater pupil voice to bring about change and to raise ideas for discussion. Pupils' contributions showed that they had been very pro-active in seeking opinions from other pupils in houses and tutor groups.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.31 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.32 The school's arrangements for safeguarding are implemented effectively in nearly all areas. However, the school's recruitment arrangements do not pay sufficient regard to the statutory guidance contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2021, when carrying out the checks to be completed before staff take up an appointment.
- 2.33 Those responsible for safeguarding hold senior positions within the school. They have appropriate levels of safeguarding training, attend regular update training and have a clear understanding of their

safeguarding responsibilities, including for multi-agency working. Suitable arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff in safeguarding procedures and protocols, including with regard to peer-on-peer abuse. During interviews, staff confirmed that they understand when peer-on-peer abuse may be a safeguarding concern. Central records of staff attendance for training are kept systematically; any absentees at the time of training are provided with update training as soon as possible.

- 2.34 A new online system for recording concerns or incidents of concern is effective. During interviews, staff reported that the new system has enabled a more rapid follow-up to issues and concerns they have raised, including those relating to peer-on-peer abuse or sexual harassment. Both staff and governors receive suitable training in these areas. The staff handbook has up-to-date information from KCSIE. This includes guidance on appropriate use, and abuse of social media and how to raise low-level concerns about staff behaviour or pupils. Staff reported that they feel confident with the school's whistleblowing procedures. They understand how to make a referral directly to children's social services should the need arise.
- 2.35 Scrutiny of records, discussions with pupils and staff indicate that appropriate safeguards are in place. Sexual violence, harassment and abuse are not tolerated by the school or pupils. There are appropriate procedures for dealing with any allegations against staff that might arise. Records of safeguarding show that the safeguarding team work closely together to ensure that information is regularly shared and procedures monitored. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) consults appropriately with other agencies when necessary, with regard to pupils' welfare, when pupils are in need or at risk, including any who are victims of harmful sexual behaviour or sexual harassment or potentially so. This information is used effectively to agree appropriate action, including the drawing-up and implementation of individual support plans. Additional arrangements to ensure the welfare of the pupils during the COVID-19 pandemic have been continually updated in line with government advice.
- 2.36 The board lead for safeguarding meets regularly with the DSL and deputies in order to maintain effective oversight of almost all areas of safeguarding policies and their implementation. Detailed school records of all safeguarding concerns are regularly monitored by the welfare and safeguarding committee on a termly basis. This committee produces an annual safeguarding review that includes appropriate sections on how the school supports pupils. It does so through effective association with the school's safeguarding team and an external auditor approved by the local authority. An annual safeguarding report is reviewed by all governors and provides a detailed overview of the school's arrangements, ensuring that governors are suitably informed. The external audit scrutinises the single central register, although it does not provide detailed information about dates of appointment and pre-employment checks. Leaders and governors are clear about their responsibility for reporting any person, whose services are no longer to be used to the appropriate statutory bodies such as the Teacher Regulation Agency, where referral criteria are met.
- 2.37 The school teaches pupils about how to keep safe and encourages them to share any concerns or worries they have. Junior school pupils and new entrants to the senior school state confidently that they receive a detailed induction when they start school, including how to stay safe. During interviews, younger pupils reported that they could always speak to members of staff if they have any concerns or worries and that they receive a response. A few older pupils indicated that, although they could approach house staff about concerns, they are not as familiar with the new counselling and support arrangements in school following a recent change in structure.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9]

- 2.38 The school has a suitable written behaviour policy. It is implemented effectively and clearly sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils' misbehaviour. These include suitable measures to deal with any sexual misbehaviour or online abuse. An appropriate record is maintained of positive and negative notifications as well as sanctions for serious misbehaviour. An overwhelming majority of parents, who responded to the questionnaires, confirmed that the school actively promotes good

behaviour and almost all pupils reported that the school expects pupils to behave well. Inspection evidence supports these views.

- 2.39 Staff manage behaviour effectively, encouraging pupils to act responsibly. Pupils are courteous and conduct themselves in a responsible manner. The behaviour observed in lessons and around the school was excellent, and evidence from pupil interviews indicated this was generally typical.
- 2.40 The school's electronic recording systems enable staff to record all behaviour issues. Minor misdemeanours are recorded on the school's information system. More serious behaviour issues, including those considered bullying or potential safeguarding concerns are recorded on the school's new online safeguarding platform. Inspection scrutiny of these records shows there is a clear oversight of all incidents of poor behaviour and information from the records informs pupil behaviour management plans. The records are regularly monitored by senior management to identify patterns and to ensure that any potential safeguarding incidents are recorded as such. Pupils during discussion commented that they are fully aware of the school rules and sanctions system. They perceive the system to be fairly administered and inspection evidence from the scrutiny of records supports this view. Pupils commented that relationships with their classmates are generally harmonious.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10]

- 2.41 Effective measures are in place to guard against bullying, including appropriate training for staff. The school policy includes comprehensive definitions of bullying and is supported by anti-cyberbullying procedures. Staff are aware of the seriousness of bullying and the need to refer to the DSL any incidents which may have an impact on safeguarding. The school's approach to preventing bullying in so far as is reasonably practicable has been strengthened by the new online reporting system. It enables patterns or trends to be identified and the needs of pupils with SEND are taken into account. Records show that appropriate action is taken.
- 2.42 Pupils are given suitable guidance about bullying through assemblies and PSHE lessons. They understand the different types of bullying, know when and how to seek help, and to report any bullying they observe. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaires confirmed that the school deals with all types of bullying and harassment effectively. A similar proportion of pupils, who responded to the questionnaires, reported that the school takes bullying seriously. When pupils report concerns, they are attended to promptly, with support given to both the victim and the perpetrator. These measures include appropriate action where any elements of bullying could be considered, such as name-calling or physical assault, including sexual violence and harassment. As a result, pupils are confident that if any incidents take place staff are prompt to intervene and help sort them out.

Quality of leadership in and management of schools – Leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.43 Governors recognise the importance of these issues, and the impact they might have on pupils. They oversaw the school's appropriate response to reports in various media, reviewed past behavioural incidents and are monitoring with care the steps the school has instituted to ensure provision to guard against incidents of sexual harassment and peer-on-peer abuse.

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>
Form 1	Year 3
Upper 1	Year 4
Lower 2	Year 5
Upper 2	Year 6
Form 3	Year 7
Form 4	Year 8
Lower 5	Year 9
Middle 5	Year 10
Upper 5	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

Key findings

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

- Pupils throughout the school make excellent progress over time, and levels of achievement are high.
- Pupils demonstrate highly effective communication skills, which they successfully apply to all areas of learning.
- The quality of the pupils' musical, artistic and sporting achievements is excellent.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are outstanding, whether they are working individually, in pairs or in groups.

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

- Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of self-confidence and self-awareness.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and show exemplary behaviour around the school.

- Pupils' social skills are excellent. In both the junior and senior schools, they relish responsibility and contribute effectively to school life.
- Pupils display a genuine concern and respect for each other.

Recommendations

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvements:
- Strengthen pupils' contributions to their own learning.
 - Ensure that pupils develop more effective social, emotional and mental health strategies through a wider network of advice and support.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 High academic achievement and enthusiasm for learning fulfil the school's aims to develop the academic, personal and physical potential of each pupil. Attainment at A level in the years 2017 to 2019, the most recent three years for which comparative data are available, was well above the national average for all maintained schools. More than half the results were consistently at A* or A grades. Pupils' performance at GCSE is equally high, with around three-quarters achieving grades 9–7 or equivalent. Attainment was at similar levels in centre assessments in 2020 and teacher assessments in 2021. There is evidence of high achievement by sixth-form pupils who complete an extended project qualification (EPQ). They demonstrate high-quality research and analytical skills. A very large majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire reported that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons. Similarly, a very large majority of pupils stated that feedback and marking helps them improve.
- 3.6 The school's own assessment data, lesson observations, pupil interviews and work scrutiny confirm that pupils make excellent progress over time. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire reported that teaching, including any online provision, enables their child to make progress. Pupils with SEND are tracked individually through learning strategy plans. The school's own assessment data show that they make progress in line with their classmates and achieve similar levels of attainment in GCSE and A-level examinations. This is because close monitoring identifies pupils' individual needs precisely and those needs are provided for through individual support. The small number of EAL pupils make excellent progress from their starting points because they are well supported in class. The most able pupils make excellent progress because they are provided with additional challenge that is well matched to their ability.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills, which they successfully apply to all areas of learning. In the junior school, pupils demonstrate excellent communication both within and beyond the classroom. Their ability to apply their speaking and listening skills in class and their reading and writing skills in their work is very effective. Year 6 pupils confidently performed *The Tempest* and showed a detailed knowledge and understanding of the play. Pupils are highly competent readers and explore a wide range of challenging literature using literacy analysis and comprehension well. Older pupils display highly developed oral communication, particularly demonstrated during a Model United Nations debate in which the quality of argument and conduct displayed by all delegates was outstanding. Pupils express themselves with clarity and are able to use technical language confidently, such as afforestation, alleviation, hard and soft engineering.
- 3.8 In the junior school, pupils demonstrate highly infectious levels of enthusiasm and consistently positive attitudes to their learning. Excellent attitudes to learning contribute to the high standards pupils achieve. Pupils across the school use their resourcefulness to develop personal skills, discover

opportunities and embrace them. This is exemplified in the way that they use drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, installation and mixed media to achieve the 'Artist of the Moment' award. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of what it means to be a successful learner. They demonstrate an outstanding ability for independent study and collaborative projects, such as when catalyst club pupils first made their own paper man puppet and then worked together to bring it to life. Pupils are confident and motivated learners, proud of their school and of their achievements. They strive to better themselves, taking initiative and gaining huge enjoyment from the standards they achieve. At all levels, pupils engage fully in academic enrichment clubs and societies, such as the medical society. In their books and folders, it was evident that the pupils work hard and that they took much pride in their written work which is almost always detailed, accurate and well presented.

- 3.9 Pupils are highly numerate. They consistently use and apply their well-developed numeracy skills across the curriculum. In the junior school, pupils display very high levels of mental agility, particularly in their understanding of multiplication tables. Year 5 pupils effectively estimated areas and then confidently extended their learning to harder tasks involving more complex calculations of area. Senior school pupils applied their knowledge of a mathematical problem in a real-life situation, to solve an issue successfully. For example, they used numeracy skills to research, design and race a model racing car down a 20-metre track to test its efficiency. In science, pupils displayed very high levels of numeracy using scale and magnification accurately, quickly calculating exponential growth of bacteria or when completing complex mole calculations. In geography, pupils were able to construct neat graphs confidently from the data provided and, sixth-form physics, pupils manipulated equations to plot linear graphs and effectively solve power law relationships. Upper-sixth further mathematicians displayed outstanding application of the central limit theorem to non-normal distributions.
- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate excellent ICT skills with high levels of digital numeracy evident. In the junior school, pupils are extremely confident to use ICT, readily integrating its use in a wide variety of lessons. Year 5 pupils talked enthusiastically about programming a robot to move in different directions through a range of mazes, responding to obstacles using a sparkle light emitting diode or a buzzer. The investment in digital infrastructure by leaders and governors is beginning to show dividends in pupils' learning across the school. All pupils aged 11 to 16 are supplied with a school-managed device, whose regular use results in highly developed digital learning skills. They confidently use hand-held technology as extensions of their writing, researching and creative tasks. Year 8 pupils filmed clips from physical education lessons to produce a video about gymnastic sequences. Other pupils use a wide range of apps and programmes to curate a wide range of resources and organise their own work. In geography, pupils deepened their knowledge about earthquakes through the creative use of interactive media.
- 3.11 Pupils of all ages demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. They are extremely confident in their use of a range of educational software and share their knowledge freely with classmates. Work in most books shows that pupils consistently apply their learning and make connections across the curriculum. Pupils across the school demonstrate excellent collaborative skills ensuring that all are engaged and contribute during group work. They review each other's work critically in a positive and supportive manner. In specific subjects, such as music, pupils showed rapid development of skills as they read notation and added chords to a melody. All pupils successfully critiqued each other's performance by, for instance, suggesting a slower pace of performance to avoid hesitancy. When encouraged to develop their knowledge, pupils are focused and respond positively. As a result, their learning and understanding are consolidated and deepened extremely well. For example, pupils described and explained complex scientific concepts on a variety of topics in biology and chemistry, ranging from cell structure to the nature of acids, mole calculations and electron shells. However, this was not consistent for all pupils in all teaching, particularly in the senior school. When teaching allowed pupils to contribute effectively to their own learning, it enabled them to present what they have learnt creatively. Where learning

was overly directed by teachers, this limited pupils' ability to use and apply the knowledge and skills they had learnt.

- 3.12 The pupils display excellent study skills. They concentrate well in class and can work effectively, both on their own, for example when completing a questionnaire about Stalin in history, and in collaboration with others. Pupils displayed an excellent approach to the development of high-order study skills, organising their resources efficiently to develop analytical writing. Lower sixth form physics pupils rapidly synthesised material property definitions in order to answer questions relating to unfamiliar materials, showing the ability to analyse and hypothesise. In English, younger pupils demonstrated excellent oral analysis of several new quotations, some using sophisticated terminology and inference for their age.
- 3.13 Pupils are extremely proud of significant achievements in local, regional and national under 11s, 13s and 15s cricket for both male and female pupils. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on other team sports, but individuals have been able to excel. Pupils have been selected for the local premier league rugby team, regional hockey, national youth sailing as well as reaching second ranking in the junior-age BMX world championship in 2021. During interviews, pupils spoke very positively about the broad range of experiences they benefit from school and about how staff challenge them to do their best, including in activities. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire say that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Achievement in music is excellent and more than one hundred pupils achieve success in instrumental and singing examinations, with almost ten achieving Grade 8 in the previous academic year. More than 60 pupils achieved silver or gold in the junior national maths challenge with more than ten reaching the annual intermediate national maths challenge.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils show excellent levels of resilience and self-knowledge in academic and extra-curricular programmes. Junior school pupils demonstrate an awareness of their ability and understand the steps necessary to improve because of teachers giving effective feedback. Senior school pupils demonstrate a strong self-will in terms of their learning and a confidence and resilience to embrace challenge. They show a pragmatic determination to achieve and illustrate very mature but high expectations of themselves. Pupils have a highly developed sense of their own minds and are self-reflective. They readily express the values which are important to them, which include honesty, being kind, teamwork, self-confidence and perseverance. During interviews, pupils reported that the 'Q & A' LGBTQ+ group has enabled them to explore feelings with a strengthened sense of identity and self-belief. Pupils are aspirational about their next steps and have a well-balanced approach to the many options open to them.
- 3.16 The pupils are astutely aware of the importance of decisions they make at various stages of their career, both at school and beyond. The youngest pupils begin to make decisions in their first few weeks, choosing how to organise themselves as well as how to relate to others. Across the rest of the school, having sought advice from adults and friends, pupils are then able to make decisions with confidence and for the right reasons. They respect the advice they receive and feel that they will be able to make the right decisions about subject choices for the sixth form and for university. They make effective decisions in other areas such as which sports to play or whether to join the combined cadet force (CCF) or participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils make these decisions with high levels of confidence.
- 3.17 Pupils in the junior school have a highly developed sense of gratitude for all that they have and have an appreciation for the non-material aspects of life. Pupils across the school attend chapel every week and say that they learn to respect other faiths as well as Christian beliefs. Even those who are not religious learn to respect the importance of spiritual traits related to being kind, non-judgemental and

tolerant towards others. Pupils are highly respectful in services and events. They show deference to religious themes shared by speakers of all faiths. Pupils have very high expectations of themselves and of others. They also understand the importance of friendship, being part of a community, thinking of others, being caring and supportive. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the chapel programme encourages them to reflect through prayer, meditation or mindfulness. For example, pupils demonstrated engagement with the contemporary viewpoint of Joseph whilst in chapel and their quiet moments of thought were focused on the bible story and the chapel surroundings.

- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the difference between right and wrong and accept responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others. This is illustrated through a mutual respect in lessons and an understanding of what constitutes good behaviour. Staff take time to explain to pupils what is unacceptable when things go wrong, and pupils are aware of the value of reflecting on poor behaviour when it does occur. As a result, pupils show exemplary behaviour around the school. In the junior school playground, disputes are often sorted equitably between pupils themselves. Older pupils showed a heightened understanding of morality as they discussed the ethical grounds for genetic development. Even when discussing complex and potentially difficult subjects such as sexual harassment the pupils displayed a mature and confident willingness to discuss issues raised.
- 3.19 In the junior school, pupils are courteous and polite, demonstrating strong social skills. They learn and play happily together, showing respect and consideration for each other. At break times and lunchtimes, pupils take turns to share equipment. They enjoy opportunities to express their views and effect change, being pleased about school council meetings and the opportunity to contribute ideas to the design of a new playground. Senior school pupils act responsibly at all times and are very aware of how their actions can affect the learning environment for others. They demonstrate outstanding understanding and ability to work effectively with others and to collaborate to achieve common goals. Relationships across the school are excellent. Pupils form positive relationships with one another, demonstrating strong levels of maturity when working collaboratively or supporting their peers. The strong ethos of being kind towards others cascades through the year groups. The pupils make the most of the many opportunities to develop social awareness whether it is in establishing a new society, being challenged on the sports field or performing on the stage.
- 3.20 During interviews, pupils report that the school is a safe environment. They are encouraged to keep physically fit and healthy. Pupils demonstrate an effective understanding of the importance of staying healthy. They participate in sports, physical education and games lessons enthusiastically. Pupils know why they should bring in healthy snacks for their breaks. They confidently talk about what is needed for mental well-being, including mindfulness and the need for sufficient sleep. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent 'I am me' presentation. They know very confidently what it means to stay safe online, and to live in a physically and mentally healthy way. Pupils appreciate the amount of time which is invested by the school in RSE and they feel that this contributes significantly to the healthy friendships they form. The pupils show a very high level of understanding of the difficulties that they and their peers faced during lockdown and were appreciative of the support they received from the school throughout the lockdown period. They were acutely aware of their friends' needs and supported one another through the difficult situations with a mature and sensitive approach. During interviews, a few pupils spoke to inspectors about a need to seek specialist help both within and beyond school. Inspectors found that some pupils feel able to seek help or support from adults when they feel they need to and they appreciate the lengths the school goes to when arranging assemblies and workshops which give them space to explore a range of issues. Others, especially older pupils, are not yet using recently provided professional sources of support within the school although they appreciate that such support is necessary in order to obtain specialist help for any mental health needs.
- 3.21 Pupils across the school take their responsibilities very seriously. They are proud of the contribution that they make as active citizens in the wider community. Pupils can take on responsibility by being

captain of a sports team, a member of the school council, or a leader in the CCF, teaching younger recruits. Year 6 pupils take on the role of buddies. Older senior pupils can mentor younger ones. Pupils across the school know very confidently how to help organise charitable and community service projects, such as racial awareness activities. Pupils identify strongly with the needs of those beyond the school gates as exemplified by the Amnesty International group, organised charitable giving to local trusts and a group supplying sanitary products for developing countries. The pupils organise these events responsibly and learn about the charities and their activities through them. During their school career, pupils become more willing to take on leadership roles and through encouragement develop into excellent leaders. The pupils have a strong understanding about contributing towards their community, both locally and the wider society. This is shown through their commitment to a variety of charitable and competitive opportunities open to them.

- 3.22 Pupils are highly respectful and engage enthusiastically in discussion around inclusion, equality and diversity in response to many opportunities to work alongside their peers and celebrate differences. They show good respect and value diversity within society, appreciating their own and other cultures and demonstrating sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions. This is because the school encourages positive attitudes through PSHE lessons and focused assemblies, such as one on the *Black Lives Matter* campaigns. Pupils from other faiths or nationalities confidently share their experiences and traditions. Everyone is welcome in the community and the pupils form excellent relationships with each other.

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 chair of governors and one other governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Desmond Dunne	Reporting inspector
Ms Kate Mc Carey	Accompanying reporting inspector (Role, association school)
Mr Daniel Wilson	Compliance team inspector (Assistant head, SofH school)
Mr Guy Barrett	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Edward Falshaw	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Chris Hall	Team inspector (Quality assurance inspector, HMC school)
Mrs Karen Pickles	Team inspector (Former senior head of boarding, IAPS and HMC schools)
Mr Joe Sidders	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)