



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Hanford School

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Hanford School			
DfE number	838/6001			
Registered charity number	2572565			
Address	Hanford School Child Okeford Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 8HN			
Telephone number	01258 860219			
Email address	office@hanfordschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Rory Johnston			
Chair of governors	Mr Andrew Hussey			
Age range	7 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	83			
	Day pupils	24	Boarders	59
Inspection dates	08 to 10 November 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Hanford School is an independent boarding and day school for female pupils. The school has a charitable foundation whose trustees provide governance. Founded in 1947, the school is accommodated in a Jacobean mansion house, surrounded by extensive parkland. Boarders are accommodated in two houses, the smaller of which is solely for Year 8 pupils.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has opened a new arts block in a converted barn. The chair of governors was appointed in July 2019.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to enable pupils to fulfil their potential by valuing each pupils' individuality and nurturing their unique talents. It seeks to do this within an environment that encourages respect whilst giving each pupil space to develop at their own pace and in their own way.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from professional family backgrounds predominantly living within a 30-mile radius of the school. Boarders' families come from surrounding counties in the south west, London and overseas, with some from military backgrounds. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly in line with the average for those taking the same test nationally. Eleven pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, all of whom receive additional specialist support. Twelve pupils are identified as having English as an additional language (EAL) all of whom receive additional support. There are no pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans. More able pupils, identified through the school's own assessment framework are supported by a modified curriculum. Pupils with particular talents in sport, the creative arts and other areas are developed through the provision of specialist teaching in their fields.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **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. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management.

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

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.14 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4 and 7 and 23 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.15 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.16 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.18 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.20 **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are met.**

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. 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>
Third Form	Year 3 and Year 4
Fourth Form	Year 5
Fifth Form	Year 6
Lower VIth	Year 7
Upper VIth	Year 8

Key findings

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

- Pupils achieve highly and most make strong overall progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are excellent and they apply them successfully across all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are at a high level in most areas.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They participate in lessons with notable enthusiasm.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are well-developed although their progress in lessons can be stalled by a lack of challenge.

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

- Pupils are highly perceptive and self-aware.
- Pupils understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is robust.
- Pupils have deep spiritual understanding, underpinned by their love for animals and the natural environment.
- Pupils have excellent collaborative skills.
- Pupils moral understanding and behaviour are good and often excellent. On occasions, however, their interactions with one another and staff do not always meet the school's high expectations.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to deepen their understanding of how digital technologies may be used to enhance their learning across a wider variety of curriculum areas.
- Ensure pupils make greater progress in mathematics by providing sufficient challenge in all lessons.
- Further develop in pupils, in line with the school's aims, a more consistent respect for other pupils and adults.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve highly and make strong progress over time, in successful fulfilment of the school's aim to enable pupils to fulfil their potential. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make outstanding progress as a result of the schools' highly effective support provided by leaders. Likewise, pupils with SEND make significant progress in line with both their potential and the success of their peers. Pupils make strong short-term progress in most lessons. For example, Year 7 pupils in a handcraft lesson maintained rapid progress when creating a washbag, completing the task to a very high standard. Pupils do not always make similar short-term progress in numeracy, where some teaching does not offer sufficient challenge for this to happen. Pupils are highly successful in gaining places to their preferred next school, with many gaining scholarships for academic success or achievements in sport, music and, notably, in art. Nearly all parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the boarding experience has helped their child to make progress. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.6 Pupils are highly articulate and effective communicators, ready and willing to make themselves heard and understood. They are very attentive, demonstrating strong listening skills, responding quickly and accurately to instructions when given. For example, Year 5 pupils rapidly responded to directions in an art lesson to collect the appropriate equipment required to complete a set task. Pupils are avid readers, supported by an inviting and well-stocked library. They are further supported by the school's strong reading culture, characterised by the school's literary festival. Pupils are highly successful and self-assured when reading aloud, enabled by the regular opportunities to practise, such as reading the lessons and prayers in chapel. Pupils' writing is sophisticated and well-structured, showing both their excellent awareness of punctuation and high levels of creativity. For example, Year 6 pupils made imaginative use of similes in their own poetry.
- 3.7 Pupils' skills for learning are highly developed. They are naturally creative, achieving considerable success in arts subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils in a modelling club, showed great creativity in their choices of colours and materials to successfully complete their projects. Year 7 pupils showed significant creativity in their formation of intricate and interesting gymnastic sequences. They have excellent physical co-ordination as seen when dance pupils completed a series of complex stretching exercises with great dexterity. Pupils are highly skilled in handcraft producing their own individual and intricately designed school clothes. They are skilled actors, with older pupils successfully creating still figures depicting a range of emotions in a drama activity. Pupils' skills for learning across the whole curriculum are highly-developed, especially in physical education, modern foreign languages, art and the humanities, which are well in advance of expectations for their age. They have extensive subject knowledge underpinned with mature understanding, as reflected in their written work. For example, Year 8 pupils demonstrated an excellent knowledge and understanding of the processes that lead to coastal erosion in written work. Pupils are also highly successful when applying their learning to other areas. Year 6 pupils accurately applied their knowledge of graphite from chemistry to inform their understanding of its use as a conductor in physics.
- 3.8 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning reflecting deep interest and passion for self-improvement. They are highly engaged and pro-active in lessons. They are enthusiastic participants, readily offering

their ideas and willing to ask challenging questions. They are highly productive, completing work to an excellent standard. For example, Year 8 pupils demonstrate high levels of application and engagement across the large amount of work completed in English. They are persistent when facing challenge, as when Year 6 pupils successfully worked through a task to place fractions in the correct order on a number line. They freely offer support to peers, for example when Year 7 pupils assisted each other whilst debugging their own coded applications in ICT. They are highly effective when working in collaboration with others as when Year 5 pupils successfully cooperated in pairs to solve subtraction questions using coloured counters. They maintain high levels of focus in lessons. For example, when Year 7 pupils' careful attention to instructions enabled them to successfully support each other to make further significant improvement in their netball skills.

- 3.9 Pupils achieve considerable success outside the formal curriculum. They are enthusiastic and active participants in the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered by school leaders. They demonstrate passion and take significant responsibility for the animals in the school's care, such as the fox hound puppies they are helping to raise. Pupils are accomplished musicians, singing to a high standard, with many participating in the chapel choir. Most pupils learn a musical instrument, with many of those achieving considerable success in grade examinations, some at notably high levels for their age. They are confident and highly proficient public performers in music and drama supported by the many opportunities to play to peers and parents in chapel, concerts and productions. Pupils are highly active and enthusiastic participants in a wide range of sports provided by leaders. For example, many pupils are passionate horse riders, also choosing to assist with the care and grooming of the ponies. Many pupils achieve considerable individual success at national level in sports, for example in show jumping, indoor skydiving and athletics. Pupils have been selected to represent their counties in hockey, athletics and netball. School sports teams in cross-country and athletics have been highly successful in regional and local tournaments. Pupils have also achieved considerable success in regional public speaking competitions and national mathematics challenge events.
- 3.10 Pupils have excellent study skills. They are highly organised in the presentation of their work, using a range of creative approaches to make their responses to tasks interesting and clear. For example, Year 5 pupils used a range of colours and fonts to create eye-catching titles for a research task in their sketch books. They successfully draw on a variety of different sources of information when undertaking research, including online sources and reference books. For example, Year 7 pupils' excellent critical thinking skills enabled them to accurately determine from letters the allegiance of a protagonist in the English Civil War. They hypothesise accurately, as when Year 5 pupils in science determined what they would need in order to survive in the vacuum of space. They have excellent skills of analysis, as when Year 7 pupils accurately determined the colour changes of simple indicators when used with acids and alkali. In discussions with inspectors, pupils explained how boarding has enabled them to gain independence and take greater responsibility for their own learning. They explained the boarding community provides a ready source of support, enabling them to develop their study skills and achieve greater success in academic work. The vast majority of parents in the questionnaires agreed that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.11 Pupils are successful mathematicians demonstrating a love of problem-solving and a fascination with finding different methods to complete calculations. They are arithmetically fluent completing simple calculations with speed and accuracy. For example, Year 6 pupils successfully counted in fractions of a quarter and a third using number lines. They can apply their understanding to complete more complex calculations. For example, Year 7 pupils accurately calculated the number and length of each note in a bar, when notating a rhythmically complex piece of music. They successfully apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum, as when Year 7 pupils accurately measured out material to line their washbags. Pupils' progress in numeracy is on occasions constrained by tasks that fail to offer the individual challenge merited by their potential.

- 3.12 Pupils are competent users of digital technology, successfully accessing online information to support their research across a range of subjects. They understand that ICT can be used as a form of communication. Year 4 pupils demonstrated excellent understanding of how to use emails safely to communicate with others. They successfully use their coding skills to create simple applications such as short animations or online quizzes. Year 7 pupils' well-developed coding skills enabled them to create interesting and successful online general knowledge quizzes. They make good use of digital technology to support their learning across some areas of the curriculum. They are creative in their use of applications to successfully combine text and images to produce interesting information pages, news-sheets and posters, for example when older pupils create the school newspaper. Pupils make excellent use of music composition software, for example when Year 7 pupils notated their own pieces of music. Year 7 pupils made successful use of tablet computers to review and improve their gymnastics performances in physical education. Pupils understanding, however, of how they could apply their ICT skills across other areas of learning is less well developed as a result of its infrequent use in lessons.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils' self-awareness is highly developed. They are very confident and usually self-disciplined in their interactions with others and during lessons. They are self-reflective and can often articulate the steps they need to take to improve further in their work. For example, Year 6 pupils' highly reflective self-evaluations in art successfully identified how they could improve their royal portraits. Pupils with EAL can articulate with high levels of accuracy the progress they have made in a relative short period of time. Pupils are highly resilient and understand the need to persist when confronted by challenges. Year 7 pupils showed strong levels of persistence and adaptability when working collaboratively to create increasingly challenging gymnastic balances. They adapt well to new situations, particularly those in boarding, who are well supported by the school's culture of regular changes to dormitory arrangements and insistence on collaborating with less familiar peers in lessons. Nearly all parents in their questionnaire responses agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.15 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. They take risk in their stride developed by the leadership's provision of challenging outdoor activities, such as tree climbing. For example, Year 4 pupils demonstrated an excellent understanding of safety whilst working on the rules to follow at the school bonfire night. Pupils are courageous when tackling the unknown, whilst recognising when it is right to ask for support. Year 5 pupils readily sought help from staff in art when the task undertaken was proving too challenging to complete on their own. They understand when rules exist to ensure their safety and adhere to these closely. For example, pupils in Year 7 wore appropriate personal protection equipment and moved around the laboratory with great care when undertaking experiments using strong acids. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of how to maintain good mental health and the need for balance in their lives. Older pupils explained in discussions with inspectors, that visiting and caring for the ponies in the stables helps them to manage at times of stress. They have an excellent understanding of how to maintain good physical health, participating fully in the extensive range of outdoor activities and sports provided by staff. Pupils understand the components of a balanced diet and make sensible, healthy choices of food at mealtimes. In their questionnaire responses, almost all pupils agreed that they understand how to stay safe online. Inspection evidence confirms this to be true.
- 3.16 Pupils have a highly developed sense of the spiritual for their age. They show high levels of appreciation for the natural environment, recognising its importance to their own peace of mind. They recognise that beauty can be found in many different ways, for example by looking up at the sky in the early morning light. Pupils' appreciation for art is excellent reflecting a deep understanding for the non-material. They recognise that happiness matters far more to them than material wealth. They

value spirituality recognising its importance even when it is not rooted within a particular faith. For example, pupils participate with great reverence in school chapel services, singing with clear voices and respectfully holding moments of silence. They deeply appreciate the beauty of the school grounds, citing its importance to their own personal happiness and well-being.

- 3.17 Pupils' social development is excellent. They are extremely sociable and develop strong and supportive relationships with staff and peers. Pupils are highly collaborative in lessons, as when Year 4 pupils in English accurately identified the most successful elements within each other's writing. They collaborate successfully beyond the classroom, for example when singing strongly in unison in chapel. They show consideration for the feelings of others and willingly offer mutual assistance. For example, Year 7 pupils gave each other excellent support when learning how to de-bug an application in ICT. Older pupils successfully fulfil their responsibilities as house captains, showing leadership and empathy towards their younger peers, for example, during house matches. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.18 Pupils contribute significantly to the lives of others, both in the school and the wider community. They enthusiastically volunteer to care for the school's many animals including ponies in the stables and the fostered fox hound puppies. They are resourceful advocates for change, particularly in relation to the environment. For example, Year 7 pupils, inspired by a class book, successfully organised a cake sale to raise funds for rainforest preservation. They actively engage with the school's fundraising initiatives, as when Year 7 pupils volunteered to undertake a sponsored walk in aid of a local children's hospice. Pupils participate with enthusiasm when given opportunities to provide feedback to the school, often making sensible suggestions about what might be improved. In this they have been effective in initiating changes to improve the quality of food provided by the school. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school is successful in preparing pupils for the next stage of the education. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.19 Pupils are confident and effective decision makers. They make excellent choices in lessons, as when Year 4 pupils selected the most appropriate components to complete circuits for testing conductivity. They make effective decisions when under pressure. For example, Year 5 pupils in a role-play vigorously and effectively negotiated the relative values of goods to be exchanged between Vikings and Saxons. They make excellent decisions to give unbidden help, as when pupils groom the ponies on their own initiative. In discussions with inspectors, the oldest pupils were able to explain with mature clarity the key considerations for them when choosing their next school.
- 3.20 Pupils are tolerant and inclusive, accepting one another for who they are. For example, in netball older pupils showed patience for peers who took longer to master the skills being taught. They work hard to ensure those from backgrounds different to their own feel included and will readily share their own faith traditions when asked by their peers to do so. International boarders feel accepted and included within the pupil community and respond positively to those who show interest in their cultures. For example, boarders spoke matter-of-factly about inclusivity, talking about the different requirements for those from faiths different to their own. They also showed strong awareness of peers with distinct dietary requirements or particular medical needs. They have an appropriate awareness of democratic institutions, particularly in relation to historical events or their impact on environmental issues.
- 3.21 Pupils' moral understanding is well developed for their age. They are extremely well-behaved at most times, particularly in lessons and activities they enjoy. In formal activities, such as chapel, they are highly respectful, engaging with deep attention and appropriate awareness. They are highly confident but on occasions allow their confidence to get the better of their self-restraint, particularly when they are not fully engaged by lesson content or where expectations made of them are unclear or not understood. On occasions in the boarding houses, their interactions can show disrespect to their peers and to staff. They do, however, frequently show deep concern and consideration for others and the animals in the school's care. They will challenge the behaviour of other pupils when it fails to meet the school's expectations and will often take responsibility when they get things wrong.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils, including boarders, and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mrs Heather Beeby	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jayne Gilbert	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Haas	Team inspector for boarding (Head, IAPS school)