



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

**HARROW SCHOOL**

**OCTOBER 2016**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Harrow School			
<b>DfE number</b>	310/6000			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	310033			
<b>Address</b>	Harrow School 5 High Street Harrow Middlesex HA1 3HP			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 88728000			
<b>Email address</b>	harrow@harrowschool.org.uk			
<b>Head Master</b>	Mr James Hawkins			
<b>Chairman of governors</b>	Mr John Batting			
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils</b>	828			
	Boys	828	Girls	0
	Day pupils	0	Boarders	828
	Number in sixth form	337		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12 to 13 Oct 2016			

## PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and grade descriptors from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

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

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a governor, observed a few of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended chapel services. Inspectors visited boarding houses and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting inspector
Mr Alan Bougeard	Team inspector (Assistant head, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Dawson	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Paul Lunn	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Michael Brewer	Team inspector for boarding (Director of inspection compliance, HMC school)
Mr Jeremy Hallows	Team inspector for boarding (Headmaster, HMC school)
Miss Elizabeth Knibb	Team inspector for boarding (Vice-principal, HMC school)
Mr Matthew Thornby	Team inspector for boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Harrow School is an independent full boarding school for boys aged between 13 and 18 years. It was founded by a royal charter granted by Elizabeth I in 1572 and has been in operation as a school for boys since 1615. It has been a boarding school for boys for most of its history. The school is part of a Royal Charter Corporation, which is a charitable trust whose trustees act as the school's governors with proprietorial responsibility. The corporation also includes another nearby independent school and licenses the Harrow name and arms to a number of international schools in south-east Asia and China. On arrival in the school, boys are allocated to one of twelve all-age boarding houses.
- 1.2 Since the previous ISI education inspection in 2010, the current head has taken office; the senior management team has been restructured; new curricular programmes have been introduced and opportunities for boys to engage in charitable work have been greatly extended.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 Harrow School believes that pupils' success should be measured not by grades, but by their influence on the world. The willingness and ability to learn, to lead and to serve are attributes that the school feels will enable boys' lives to be both well lived and worthwhile. The school's purpose is to develop these qualities in its pupils during their time in the school, by encouraging and developing scholarship, opportunity and character. The school aspires to encourage intellectual curiosity, independent thought and effective learning habits to support this development.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come mainly from a range of professional and business family backgrounds, drawn from throughout the UK, and also a small proportion from overseas. The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 27. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 134 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), but only 27 require language support. The school does not formally identify and cater for a cohort of the most able pupils. However, around 60 pupils hold scholarships for potential, prowess and talent in academic areas, sport and music.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report 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>
Shell	Year 9
Remove	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

### **Recommendations from previous inspections**

- 1.6 The previous educational inspection of the school by ISI was an Interim inspection in November 2010. The recommendation from that inspection was:
  - Ensure the implementation of the well-conceived plan to manage forthcoming changes in senior staff.
- 1.7 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in March 2014 was:
  - Expedite plans for the electronic tracking of the administration of medication between houses and the medical centre.
- 1.8 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspections. Further detail is given in the report.

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

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

- Results at GCSE have been far above the national average; those at A level have been well above the national average.
- Pupils are highly motivated to work hard and succeed.
- Their subject knowledge and understanding are excellent, and they apply this very well to new situations.
- They show outstanding learning and thinking skills, and intellectual curiosity, and work very well independently and in collaboration with others.

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

- They exhibit exceptionally strong social skills, a high level of moral awareness and an outstanding sense of responsibility for themselves and others.
- They make well-considered decisions about issues affecting them, based on rational and relevant appreciation of choices and consequences.
- They have a very strong sense of service to others and a commitment to contribute positively to the local and wider community.

### **Recommendations**

2.3 Within the context of the excellent outcomes, the school may wish to consider the following action.

- Extend opportunities for pupils to use a wider range of digital media and information and communication technology (ICT) applications to further enhance their learning and progress across the curriculum.



### 3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are high achievers in all areas of their academic lives. Their success owes much to the strong and supportive boarding community to which they all belong and which gives them encouragement to work hard and aim high, and the confidence to set themselves ambitious goals. Pupils invariably work hard and utilise their strong motivation and desire to succeed, and this is one of the main drivers in their success. The strong progress they make, and their all-round excellent achievement is enabled by many innovative approaches and initiatives introduced by school leaders. These provide stimulus and challenge for pupils. Almost all pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that they have good opportunities to learn and make progress. The electives programme, introduced for Year 10 and the sixth form, stimulates pupils to extend their thinking and expectations as they embark on subject matter way beyond that normally offered to pupils of their age. For example, Year 10 pupils grapple successfully with higher-level abstract mathematics, and sixth formers produce well-researched essays on areas such as globalisation, eugenics and complex literary criticism.
- 3.3 Pupils' academic success is reflected in the change in their attainment over time, as indicated by public examination results. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2013 to 2015, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been far above the national average; those at IGCSE have been above worldwide norms. Results at A level have been well above the national average. Taking these historical results and inspection evidence gained from the achievement of current pupils into account, it is clear that pupils make consistently good progress during their time in the school. Many make excellent progress. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve at a similar rate to other pupils. Pupils' progress is supported by the monitoring and assessment systems used effectively by teachers and senior leaders which enable pupils to identify their own targets for improvement.
- 3.4 Pupils show high levels of subject knowledge across all areas of learning, and demonstrate their excellent understanding in many ways. They have a particularly good recall of information previously learnt and apply it very effectively in new situations; for example, they use it to make accurate predictions and hypotheses. Most pupils display an enhanced understanding of theoretical concepts and abstract ideas, and use technical vocabulary with ease. On a few occasions, pupils demonstrate less enhanced understanding of such abstract concepts because teaching fails to challenge them sufficiently to promote this. Younger pupils show a particularly good ability to link cause and effect, for example in predicting the impact on trade of leaving the European Union. Classicists showed themselves particularly adept at appreciating links between different subject areas, for example in relating Latin words to other languages and the themes presented in war poetry. Older pupils show a pronounced ability to choose appropriate solutions and methods to solve problems, both abstract, in complex algebraic situations, and practical, for example when they analysed different ways to protect an egg in a collision, with success.
- 3.5 Pupils' communication skills are outstanding and they produce written work which is fluent, imaginative and technically correct. Pupils' original articles and letters, published in the weekly *Harrovian*, reveal their strong literary traits and their interest in aspects of school life and the world beyond. They read well and with interest, encouraged by the school-wide reading strategy that is starting to enhance their reading in pursuit of academic goals and for pleasure. Pupils read aloud with confidence and clarity and their spontaneous responses in class show them to have a quick grasp of subject matter and the ability to marshal facts into a coherent and articulate argument. They ask perceptive and interesting questions, frequently diverting from the matter being discussed, and the teachers' willingness to be occasionally side-tracked enhances the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Pupils are adept in communicating and interpreting information in different ways, often by utilising their strong numerical skills in subjects such as the sciences, economics, geography and

art through diagrams, graphs and complex calculations. Their ICT competence is used effectively in many areas, such as the use of graphical functions in programmable calculators, but often it is used only in general spreadsheet and presentation software, rather than capitalising on the wider range of digital applications available. Pupils use appropriate software to great effect in their creative compositions in photography and music technology.

- 3.6 Pupils of all ages show conspicuous success in their achievement, learning and participation in activities and events outside the classroom. This success is largely promoted by the exceptional diversity of the extra-curricular programme, enabled by effective use of the possibilities afforded by the whole school being present all day and all week. Pupils' achievements in these areas represent very successful fulfilment of the school's aim to educate pupils beyond the classroom, a success reflected in the praise by almost all pupils and all parents in the questionnaire for the range and quality of the activities programme. Pupils have represented their county in cricket, have won local and national competitions in rugby, participated in national competitions in soccer and athletics, and achieved notable success in skiing, squash and rackets. Music is a particular strength of the school, with many pupils gaining national recognition and success. Many pupils have also achieved at a high level in drama, with some taking part in the National Youth Theatre and BBC productions. All Year 9 pupils participate in plays performed by their year group early in their time in the school.
- 3.7 Pupils, particularly the scholars and the more able, benefit greatly from the many intellectual and learned societies and interest groups. These enhance their interest and motivation and enable them to think more deeply about their chosen subjects and their wider experience. They are able to achieve at a very high level in a wide range of external competitions and Olympiads, some of which were held overseas. The high level of pupils' thinking and reasoning skills benefits significantly from what the school calls its 'super-curriculum', a highly effective initiative and programme that includes debates, talks, academic competitions, academic trips and additional languages in addition to the electives.
- 3.8 Pupils show exceptional learning skills, and this represents a most successful fulfilment of the school's aim to encourage intellectual curiosity and independent thought. Pupils show a marked ability to push themselves hard, nearly always with alacrity and enthusiasm, and frequently opt for the more challenging options given to them. They are particularly good at extrapolating from a small body of known information in order to generalise more widely, and identify important links with society and the natural world. Geographers see clearly the human implications of worldwide and natural events and phenomena. Economists relate economic theory to contemporary upheavals in the world of commerce. Pupils understand the need to draw on a wide range of carefully researched information to synthesise an argument and defend a proposition. Historians show sharp critical analysis of sources, establishing context and determining bias.
- 3.9 Pupils enjoy and benefit greatly from opportunities to collaborate in their learning, much of which is initiated by them. More able pupils willingly help others in need of support. Pupils are keen to learn and make progress and most understand that success is not solely about examination success. Pupils consider that challenging teaching and an imaginative curriculum encourage them to successfully develop independent learning habits and show initiative in their preparation for class and private study. They feel that the support provided by their teachers is a major factor in their success. Inspection evidence corroborates these views. Pupils' progress is at its most rapid when the teaching is challenging and employs a wide range of thought-provoking activities and resources. New pupils in Year 9 felt that the development of academic independence was one of the most important lessons they had learnt during their short time in the school.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 A significant influence on the development of these excellent personal qualities is the strong ethos, vision and sense of purpose promoted by senior leaders and governors. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire felt that the school is active in promoting strong and worthwhile attitudes and values, and that the boarding environment supports their sons' personal growth and development.
- 4.3 Pupils of all ages are extremely confident individuals, without becoming overbearing or insensitive to others. The experience of living in a boarding community plays a large part in helping pupils to stand on their own feet successfully, develop suitable resilience, and embrace the many opportunities that the school gives them. Pupils who had recently joined the school reported that the welcoming and supportive environment of their boarding houses enabled them to make a secure start to their school life. A very large majority of pupils responding to the questionnaire acknowledged that the boarding experience has helped them to grow in confidence and independence. Pupils appreciate the support of their teachers and house staff, which they feel helps them to monitor their academic and pastoral progress and identify future steps to success. Year 9 pupils consider that new reporting systems with extra emphasis on effort and progress enable them to track their own development and progress more easily.
- 4.4 School monitors and Year 10 'shepherds', who look after younger pupils, feel confident in undertaking their duties, and are very much aware of the need to support those younger than themselves. New boarders said that the help of these senior boarders helped them in overcoming early homesickness. Monitors understand the need to reflect on situations and incidents before acting. Cadets in the school's rifle corps spoke of their growing self-awareness of latent leadership skills. For some, this inner awareness of their strengths and obligations has a spiritual dimension. Pupils spoke of their appreciation of quiet moments for personal reflection in chapel events and the relevant messages promoted by house groups in the Morning Reflection. In lessons, pupils benefit from opportunities to reflect on and respond to a wide range of thought-provoking visual and verbal stimuli, such as an analysis of their own feelings when contemplating the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Many pupils spoke of the personal inspiration they gain from many creative activities in art, music and drama, both as participants and as observers of their peers.
- 4.5 Strengthened by high levels of self-awareness and their understanding of their personal strengths, pupils recognise the importance of decision making in shaping their current and future lives. Pupils are acutely aware of their responsibility to make correct decisions, especially about the relationships they form in school and beyond, and understand that choices made have consequences. They show the ability to develop natural and spontaneous responses to the expectations and ethos of the school, in terms of their personal behaviour and their positive interaction with others. As pupils move up through the school, they make informed and worthwhile decisions about their academic work, their participation in voluntary activities, and planning for their future lives. Older pupils develop the key skills needed to secure university places and future careers. By the time they reach the end of their time at Harrow, they recognise that they are well prepared for life outside. Older pupils confirm that they have benefited greatly from the development of many life skills, the independence they have gained and the excellent personal progress they feel they have made.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate ethical behaviour and a very strong sense of moral awareness. They recognise the purpose of rules to govern the smooth running of the school and house communities, even if they do not necessarily agree with them all. Pupils are fully aware of the responsibilities of living communally and regulating their behaviour for the common good. New boarders develop their own 'Room Mates' Charter', which provides an informal code by which they will live together. In class, pupils display an awareness of many of the moral dilemmas facing society such as abortion, euthanasia and the mass movement of people. Pupils' well-developed appreciation of the need to

accept responsibility for their own behaviour is augmented by the comprehensive and appreciated school-wide health education programme. This enables pupils to develop a balanced understanding of a wide range of issues and life skills, and thus make informed decisions about their own relationships and conduct. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and understand the benefits of leading a balanced lifestyle. Pupils appreciate that the school is as concerned for their emotional and mental health as their physical health and feel they develop because of this.

- 4.7 A great strength of the school is the way in which the pupils act collaboratively with each other and work towards an identified goal. This is widely evident in their strong ability to generate and thrive on teamwork, whether this is on the games field, on stage, or in the concert hall. Pupils also participate with enthusiasm and enjoyment in the many house-based events and activities. Just as notable are the ways in which pupils show strong personal stamina and perseverance. Pupils agree that many of the activities they undertake involve physical effort, such as the rifle corps, the school's traditional sponsored run, the Long Ducker, and the arduous expeditions they go on for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. They recognise the benefit that comes from success earned through effort, and understand that such events require them to dig deep into their reserves of stamina, self-discipline, and adaptability. Pupils have to cope with challenging intellectual programmes as well as their extra-curricular activities, and many have to work particularly hard to balance the many demands placed on them. Pupils' attitudes and the positive relationships they develop are strengthened by the continuous care, support and interest in them shown by boarding and other staff.
- 4.8 Pupils have a marked sense of service to others, and this is evident in many ways. They show a very strong commitment to contributing positively to the lives of others, and much of this occurs successfully in the boarding houses. Many pupils spoke movingly and eloquently about their experience as part of the school's 'Shaftesbury Enterprise' scheme, which is focused on charitable work. All these activities allow pupils to put back something into the local and wider community, and this is an obligation that pupils recognise as important. Some are involved productively in conservation work, some benefit from participation in local groups and charitable organisations and others organise their own fund-raising events. A number of pupils described their experiences as eye-opening and truly life-changing. Pupils commented that working with young offenders in arduous conditions, or working with children with disabilities, enables them to gain a rapid understanding of how to get the best from others in situations which are initially challenging. They felt these experiences help them to develop important skills in working with others.
- 4.9 Such experiences and challenges enable pupils to develop a strong appreciation of the diversity of modern society and to understand cultural differences. This is reflected in the calm and natural integration of those from many different backgrounds within the pupil body. Pupils stress the tolerant and all-embracing nature of the school community, evident in chapel presentations and society activities. Pupils show a strong appreciation of their own cultural heritage and the school's long and proud traditions. They also take the initiative in finding external speakers to broaden their outlook on life.