



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Heathfield Knoll School

September 2022

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School's Details

School	Heathfield Knoll School			
DfE number	885/6014			
Early Years registration number	EY279901			
Address	Heathfield Knoll School Wolverley Kidderminster Worcestershire DY10 3QE			
Telephone number	01562 850204			
Email address	info@hkschool.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Lawrence Collins			
Proprietor	KSI HKS Ltd			
Age range	0 to 17			
Number of pupils on roll	232			
	EYFS	46	Juniors	96
	Seniors	85	Sixth Form	5
Inspection dates	13 to 15 September 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Heathfield Knoll School is an independent co-educational day school located just outside the village of Wolverley near Kidderminster. The school was created in January 2017, following the merger of Heathfield School, and Knoll School. Formerly a charitable trust, the school was acquired by KSI Education in 2020.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has developed three additional areas within the school, including a facility to support 24 children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, additional music rooms and food technology suite, and a new art facility, enabling the creation of a sixth-form facility.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide learning that is fun and engaging, enabling pupils to fulfil their potential, regardless of ability. It seeks to treat pupils as individuals and nurture their development of tolerance and respect, so that they leave the school as well-rounded, informed and balanced young adults.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly average compared with those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 81 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include physical, cognitive and emotional difficulties, 43 of whom receive additional specialist help, and 38 of whom have an EHC plan. No pupils have English as an additional language. Data used by the school have identified 21 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

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. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

This is a 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. 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. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Additionally, this visit serves as a material change visit to assess the school's proposal to increase its age range from 0–16 to 0–19 to introduce a 6th form.

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](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 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.
- 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.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is 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 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, 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.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 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.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 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.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 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.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 3.2 The planning and designing of the curriculum by leaders and practitioners are informed by an understanding of each child and undertaken with great care. This level of detail ensures that the educational programmes are well implemented and meet the unique needs and interests of each child. The curriculum is regularly monitored and evaluated to fully understand the impact on a child's learning.
- 3.3 Care practices, the knowledge of the curriculum and a good understanding of each child's level of development ensure that all children's needs are met and that they are safe and happy. All children make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Support for children for whom there is a concern is provided. Regular meetings with parents and external agencies enable these children to make good progress.
- 3.4 Children display high levels of personal and emotional security, consistently demonstrating that they feel extremely happy. Relationships formed between the children and their key persons are strong and positive. When they leave their main carer, or when a routine changes, children adapt confidently showing that they feel safe and secure.
- 3.5 Requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met and are monitored regularly by leaders and managers. Practitioners understand how to protect children who feel safe and cared for as a result of the strong culture of shared responsibility evident throughout the setting.
- 3.6 Leaders and managers have a sound knowledge of the EYFS learning requirements as well as a shared vision for future development. Nursery leaders and managers regularly evaluate their provision and curriculum planning through nursery meetings. This approach enables them to plan a secure way forward.

Quality of education

- 3.7 The quality of education is good.
- 3.8 Curriculum intentions are based on the practitioners' understanding of each child's level of development gained through observations, information from parents and previous settings. This knowledge enables prior skills to be securely built on, through learning experiences designed to meet each child's individual needs. Leaders monitor the curriculum, ensuring they are confident that such learning intentions are met and are appropriate for each child. There are no children who receive additional funding.
- 3.9 The environment provides all children with opportunities to build on previous knowledge through the provision of carefully planned learning experiences. Practitioners ensure that the content and progression of the curriculum is planned and implemented, based on each child's interests and needs. The support each child receives is good, enabling them to secure good progress in the areas of learning. Practitioners extend learning in line with the level of development of each child. However, opportunities to further challenge their learning are missed, in particular during mathematical development.
- 3.10 Practitioners spend time with each child to assess what they know and can do, whilst understanding how each child's learning needs to progress. The impact of the curriculum on each child is recognised by the knowledgeable key persons who prepare the children for the next stage in their learning and for future success. The best time for a child to move to the next class is decided by both practitioners and parents and is based on their linguistic, physical and emotional readiness.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 3.11 Behaviour and attitudes are good.
- 3.12 Children engage confidently as they have uninterrupted time to play and explore. Their desire to learn is evidenced by their motivation and curiosity as they deepen their knowledge and skills. Two children work well together to explore the bug hotel, discovering which creatures are living there. They use magnifying glasses to identify a spider and when it runs away, persist until they find it. Younger children curiously opened a large treasure chest as they investigated the sand and shells inside, demonstrating improved skills as they dug with a variety of tools.
- 3.13 Children are active learners who show great enthusiasm and a strong desire to find out more. Children demonstrate simple mathematical language as they confidently select one object and give it to the adult. They use their imagination as they make dinner in the outdoor kitchen.
- 3.14 Children think creatively and develop their own ideas when investigating and experimenting. The youngest children showed their problem-solving skills as they investigated water and how they could use spades to move it to fill watering cans. They developed the activity by pouring it down a water run and observing the water wheels turning. A practitioner supports this activity sensitively whilst allowing the children to have their own ideas in order to enjoy success.
- 3.15 Parents work together with practitioners sharing their child's achievements from home. They are kept regularly informed about their child's activities and progress through the online learning journal. This partnership fosters the children's attendance and encourages excellent habits for future learning. Practitioners and parents support and encourage their excellent behaviour. Children are kind and caring towards each other.

Personal development

- 3.16 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 3.17 Children's unique needs and interests are known extremely well. This ensures that each child receives support in the promotion of their emotional security and character development. Practitioners are highly committed to meeting care needs, as well as ensuring children are extremely happy. Children engage confidently with a visitor, sharing books and saying hello, showing how very secure they are.
- 3.18 As practitioners effectively build children's language and physical skills, they encourage high levels of confidence. Their excellent support provides many opportunities for greater independence as children competently make their own choices at lunch and when choosing outdoor resources. Practitioners interact extremely warmly and positively with all children and build excellent relationships. These strong caring relationships enable all children to learn and develop extremely well.
- 3.19 As children take risks to succeed when riding bikes, the excellent care and encouragement provided by all key persons enables them to become extremely secure physically and emotionally. Practitioners demonstrate a high level of commitment as they continually support and encourage the children to try new activities. This fosters high levels of self-esteem.
- 3.20 Children respond extremely positively to well-established systems. These enable familiarity and secure attachments with key persons, promoting a high level of independence and well-being. Children seek out their key person when needing assurance, showing an extremely strong sense of emotional security. They make positive relationships and manage their own feelings extremely well. Practitioners' response is especially warm and supportive when children need extra reassurance, enabling them to feel secure. A high level of care is provided for all children including those who have specific needs.
- 3.21 Children enjoy nutritious food as they share mealtimes. Allergy needs, and food preferences, are extremely well known and catered for, ensuring a high level of safety. Excellent opportunities for children to be physically active are provided within an extremely safe environment. When outside

they are careful of others, especially when playing on wheeled toys and swings. Their enjoyment when riding the balance bike is evident as they skilfully and confidently negotiate space. Children gain a very effective understanding of safety as they are taught to carefully use simple tools, such as scissors and cutlery.

- 3.22 All practitioners have a very secure knowledge and understanding of policies and procedures, implementing them with a high level of commitment. They are securely aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe ensuring that the setting consistently meets the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare, learning and development. Training is regularly accessed by practitioners ensuring they are fully up to date with legal requirements, for example safeguarding and paediatric first aid.
- 3.23 Hygiene practices are implemented rigorously, meeting the children's personal needs. As practitioners help them wash hands before meals, children understand this to be an important routine. Important values are learned by the children, including making sure they are heard and making their own choices. They are extremely respectful and caring within the nursery community and co-operate as they carry a tyre together or play on the seesaw. These excellent attitudes are modelled by practitioners and prepare the children well for life in modern Britain. The nursery celebrates many festivals from different cultures for example Rosh Hashanah and Thanksgiving, enabling the children to develop their understanding of diversity.

Leadership and management

- 3.24 Leadership and management are good.
- 3.25 A clear understanding of policies, practice and positive values are shared by leaders and managers, enabling them to commit together to an ambitious vision for future development. As they evaluate provision, they commit to providing consistently good care and education, ensuring children can access appropriate learning opportunities and are happy and well cared for.
- 3.26 Opportunities for professional development which builds knowledge are provided for all practitioners. However, access to a wider variety of training and observing opportunities is limited by staffing constraints. Professional knowledge, which translates into improvements in the children's learning experiences has a very positive impact on the children's outcomes. For example, the Nursery SENCo attended an outdoor learning training event, and as a result shared her knowledge by leading the development of the outdoor area with a focus on using natural materials and encouraging purposeful use of the space. Evidence shows that there has been a notable improvement in the children's engagement with the outdoor activities and in their ability to choose and persist with a task.
- 3.27 Practitioners feel extremely well supported in their roles on a daily basis. High quality regular supervisions show that their well-being is of the utmost importance to leaders and managers. Leaders work extremely closely with practitioners to ensure that all children, including those with SEND, are appropriately supported and receive a good level of care and education. Support systems for all children ensure their individual needs are met.
- 3.28 Supportive engagement between leaders and managers, children, their parents and others, including local services such as speech and language providers, shows a positive collaboration with those in and outside the nursery setting. Questionnaire responses show that parents believe that the staff are dedicated, informative, approachable and understanding. They feel that their opinion is valued and that the needs of each child are understood and met.
- 3.29 The chair of the Local Advisory Board has visited the nursery and understands his responsibility for its oversight. He recognises the value of its provision and meets with leaders to further understand the needs. Leaders fulfil their statutory duties; for example, under the Equality Act 2010 and other duties, and in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Provide increased mathematical challenge in order that all children are consistently able to develop their understanding, knowledge and skills in this area of learning further.
- Ensure that practitioners are able to experience a greater variety of professional development opportunities to further increase their skills, knowledge and understanding.

4. Recommendation with regard to material change request

Summary of findings

- 4.1 The school's own framework for assessment and the 2022 GCSE results confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress. 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 and staffing of the new provision will come from existing resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. 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. Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.
- 4.2 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. Safeguarding procedures are implemented to safeguard children at risk and those in need. Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities, including with regard to peer-on-peer abuse and any such abuse linked to respect for those with protected characteristics. Staff show appropriate awareness of the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing policy and safeguarding procedures. They have a suitable knowledge of the thresholds for reporting potential issues and allegations of sexual harassment. Staff are aware of who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure and also that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary. They take appropriate action when necessary. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.
- 4.3 The proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy. Records show that testing of electrical, water and other utilities is regularly undertaken. Staff are effectively trained in health and safety and deal promptly and appropriately with accidents if they occur, including through the reporting of serious accidents. Systematic records ensure trends are identified and steps taken to mitigate recurrence of any health and safety issues. There are appropriate assessments of risk for in-school activities, school visits, and for the needs of individual pupils both while in school and in the surrounding area, and appropriate action is taken to mitigate risks identified. The school has a fire risk (prevention) policy which includes the elimination or reduction of risks from dangerous substances. A fire risk assessment of all buildings has been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Fire procedures are understood by, and training provided for, staff. Termly fire drills are carried out and recorded. Pupils are appropriately supervised by qualified and trained staff. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.
- 4.4 All the required checks on staff and governors are carried out and completed before they take up their posts. The school does not employ supply staff. Contractors send the school up-to-date information on checks they have undertaken on their employees, and the school makes appropriate further checks on arrival. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers. The school maintains correctly an accurate single central register of appointments which includes the dates on which all checks have been completed.
- 4.5 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; and water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. The provision, including the new building, is likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the school's material change request to increase the age range to 19 be approved.

5. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

Key findings

5.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- The progress made by some pupils is excellent, demonstrating considerable value being added to their starting points.
- Pupils demonstrate a passion for mathematical thinking and their numeracy skills are well-developed.
- Pupils' information, communication and technology (ICT) skills are highly developed and are seamlessly embedded in their working methods.
- Pupils' progression in lessons is sometimes hampered by a lack of pace, restricted opportunities for independent work and higher-order thinking.

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

- Individual pupils make strides in their personal development throughout their time in the school, which are beyond the norm.
- Behaviour within the school is generally excellent.
- Pupils' social skills are well-developed, and they demonstrate highly effective social collaboration and respect for each other.
- Pupils' decision-making skills are sometimes restricted by their over-reliance on adults.
- Pupils show respect for each other, their own cultures and those of others. They recognise that their peers are neuro-diverse and that the value every one of them is of equal importance.

Recommendations

5.3 The school should make the following improvements.

- Ensure all pupils consistently have the opportunity to work at a faster pace and appropriately challenging level.
- Strengthen pupils' range of higher-order thinking skills.
- Ensure pupils develop independence and leadership of their learning.
- Develop pupils' ability to make and influence decisions which positively impact their lives in school.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 5.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 5.5 Pupils demonstrate good levels of academic achievement as a result of a comprehensively nurturing approach on the part of all members of the school community. The undoubted commitment of senior leaders and the well-planned support provided by teachers, ensures pupils attain good and sometimes excellent results in externally standardised tests and public examinations.
- 5.6 Pupils with SEND, both in the specialist alternative provision and in the mainstream classes, attain equally strong grades, often from considerably lower starting points. Most pupils gain entry to their first-choice schools and colleges to study A levels, and in a small number of cases, vocational subjects. Pupils make excellent progress over their time in the school. Well-managed tracking, monitoring and intervention systems contribute to significant value being added to pupils' progress and academic outcomes. Pupils with SEND achieve excellent levels of progress, benefitting from the school's high expectations of, and belief in, its pupils. Results at GCSE are indicative of the supportive approach to learning and teaching. In 2022 one-third of results were at the highest three grades, roughly in line with the 2020 and 2021 centre- and teacher-assessed assessments. Data analysed show that almost all pupils achieve significantly higher GCSE grades than expected for their ability on entry. This represents rapid progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching, including any online provision, enables their child to make progress. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire feel their teachers are supportive, know their subjects well, and know how to help them learn.
- 5.7 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across different areas of learning are good and sometimes excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic about acquiring new knowledge and are skilled in their application of techniques and methods. They draw upon previous learning and can, when given opportunities to do so, demonstrate success in applying this to problem-solving exercises. For example, in the EYFS, children were able to demonstrate their proficiency in mixing, stirring, and snipping the ingredients to make hummus. In mathematics, Year 9 pupils are highly adept at adding mixed numbers as they consistently followed the rules they have learned and moved on to extension tasks with an equally good level of success. In a Year 5 lesson developing their understanding of figurative language, pupils successfully applied their knowledge of parts of speech to a description of the main character in a story. Pupils with SEND describe and develop characters with confidence and use strong vocabulary, for example, 'his clothes are a suit of black and a cloak of dread'. Comprehensive curriculum planning by senior leaders and faculty heads ensures pupils of all needs and abilities develop an appropriate range of skills across the academic curriculum. The drawing of cross-curricular links successfully enhances the pupils' learning experience, for example a school-wide approach to considering numeracy in subjects other than mathematics.
- 5.8 Pupils are good communicators. They speak fluently and with assurance, for example Reception children expressed their opinions with confidence when discussing a story about diversity. Year 2 pupils skilfully articulated the features of a poster to advertise a missing toy in English and Year 11 pupils knowledgeably discussed their practical work on resistance. Pupils' listening skills are excellent. For example, pupils in the alternative provision classes are respectful of their teachers and peers when they are speaking; and when discussing different viewpoints in a history lesson about living standards before the industrial revolution, Year 8 pupils listened to each other with good levels of concentration and can modify their views as a result. All aspects of pupils' written work is generally good and improves as pupils develop through the school. They are increasingly aware of how to improve the quality of their writing, supported by regular verbal feedback in small classes. The most able pupils write in depth and add analytical detail.
- 5.9 Pupils' numeracy skills are well-developed. They demonstrate a passion for mathematical thinking and engage enthusiastically in its application. This enthusiasm is evident at all stages and pupils are keen

to share how they use their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, younger children integrate their mathematical knowledge in their music lessons when counting how many times they sing a particular phrase in a song about a scarecrow and when counting how many snails they find under a log. In a Year 2 lesson, mental strategies are successfully applied to solve problems and in Years 3 and 4 when pupils identify patterns of natural symmetry in outdoor education lessons. In Year 9, the most able pupils make excellent progress when applying rapid and methodical rules of adding fractions. Year 11 scientists use graphs to identify outliers in their experiment data, and in food technology, they make accurate judgments about the relative methods of using different types of flour when baking bread.

- 5.10 Pupils' information, communication and technology (ICT) skills are highly developed. Younger children demonstrate their understanding that a tablet can be used to find information and with great interest the children discover what snails like to eat. From Year 3, pupils regularly use laptop devices to support and organise their learning. This approach leads to an adept and unfussy method of organising their work, recording, and completing homework, and managing project work. In Year 5, pupils collate digital art images, and Year 7 pupils select a wide variety of websites in geography to elicit information on cities in Brazil. Pupils with SEND use ICT highly effectively to enable their access to the curriculum as demonstrated in an outstanding folder of work in Year 11.
- 5.11 Most pupils demonstrate good levels of focus, self-discipline, and basic study skills in lessons. However, pupils sometimes lose focus when teaching lacks pace and challenge. They respond very well in lessons where teachers provide opportunities for higher-order thinking to extend their learning. As a result of effective use of suitable resources, pupils are able to demonstrate their initiative. For example, in Year 2, pupils successfully use wall displays to self-correct spellings. In a Year 5 science lesson they hypothesise on balanced and unbalanced forces and the role played by gravity and the upthrust of the desk. Year 8 pupils synthesise very well their knowledge of life in Britain before the industrial revolution and draw telling and well-substantiated conclusions about levels of health and prosperity.
- 5.12 Pupils are encouraged to expand their interests outside the classroom and become increasingly confident performers through their participation in the performing arts. Whilst some enjoy the thrill of being on stage, working collaboratively across year groups in a production of *We Will Rock You*, others contribute backstage through an increased interest in the use of the lighting equipment. As a result of their experiences in school, pupils have taken title roles in outside productions, and pupils' success in nationally assessed music exams is often at a high level. Pupils effectively demonstrate their musical talents further through active involvement in regular solo and ensemble performances each term. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to make choices about which activities they attend during and after the school day. They spoke positively about their involvement in the eco committee, LGBTQ+ club, enterprise endeavours and art.
- 5.13 Many pupils find pleasure and achieve personal and academic success through the school's encouragement to develop their interest and talent in a range of regional and national competitions and events, for example, county swimming, national art competitions, and successful membership of the British equine dressage team. The school's non-elitist approach to sport enables pupils to enjoy a wide range of activities in and out of school. From an initial love of sport at school and through engagement with the after-school activity programme, pupils enjoy rewarding experiences through the use of local organisations and community partnerships. Many entrants to a national speaking competition achieve high grades and other opportunities in school for English and other language-based competitions and events are highly valued by the participating pupils. For example, pupils enjoyed reading and analysing Spanish poetry before writing their own and winning a national competition. Mathematicians are equally enthusiastic about competing and in a small number of cases, gain the highest levels in national challenges. Most parents say that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities.

- 5.14 Pupils' attitudes to learning can be excellent. At their best, pupils work effectively together and take responsibility for their learning. However, on occasion, a lack of opportunities provided by teachers, limits greater development of leadership of their learning. Younger children concentrate very well in lessons, showing consideration for others in discussions and respect for their teachers. Pupils are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and to see them as valuable learning opportunities. Collaboration across ability ranges is evident in the lower and middle schools and where opportunities for this approach are created by teachers, this continues into the senior school. For example, when Year 8 pupils took a particular interest in medical advances, they were given rein to their enthusiasm and increased, high-quality learning was achieved.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 5.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 5.16 Pupils' development of their self-knowledge and confidence is strong. Where pupils manage their own learning and performance, outcomes are enhanced, and where they are enabled to independently self-correct and improve their work, they demonstrate a sense of pride. Pupils with SEND in the alternative provision setting analyse and understand their emotions throughout a typical day. They discuss their levels of self-knowledge and self-understanding to help them cope in life. Their self-esteem is visibly enhanced by acting out a story book and they demonstrate pride in their achievements. Pupils accept that failure is a positive aspect of learning and in doing so, develop a keen sense of self-awareness and increased resilience. Older pupils talk openly about their perceptions of workload-related stress and demonstrate self-awareness of the problem. They clearly express their understanding of the need to stop when tired and seek strategies to deal with perceived external pressures. Year 8 pupils spoke clearly and enthusiastically about career aspirations and how they might achieve these, for example, studying music as a degree and recognising how the school provides opportunities to support this.
- 5.17 Where pupils are given opportunities to make decisions in their learning, they respond positively. For example, when some of the younger pupils choose appropriate resources to aid their calculations in mathematics. At snack time pupils make sensible choices about food and drink, informed by knowing what is healthy. Junior school pupils have a strong understanding that they can make positive choices in life, for example to rectify difficult situations resulting from disagreements with peers. Year 11 pupils demonstrate their ability to manage their work when they become tired and anxious, expressing sensible decisions to prioritise their health. Pupils take pride in making decisions about the charities the school supports each year. As a result of well-designed classrooms, teachers' care, and small class sizes, pupils feel safe and secure to make decisions and relish these opportunities when they arise.
- 5.18 Pupils develop a good level of spiritual awareness. This can be partly attributed to the time they spend outdoors in the rural site of the school. Younger children demonstrate awe and wonder, and their delight is clearly evident when finding snails under a log and on seeing rainbow colours in water when sweets are dropped in. Year 5 pupils participate enthusiastically in mindfulness sessions and are able to link this to their mental health. When writing about special places, Year 2 pupils demonstrate an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Year 9 pupils respond well when considering whether miracles happen or if issues are merely coincidences. They ponder on how the universe began and consider the cosmological argument for the existence of God. The strongest teaching encourages this aspect of the pupils' experience and emotional development.
- 5.19 Behaviour within the school is excellent and pupils show respect towards others in the school community. In the questionnaires, a large majority of pupils agreed with the statement that pupils are kind and respect each other. Care for others is embedded from the start and children in the EYFS take responsibility for themselves and understand the need to follow the rules. Year 1 pupils demonstrate good understanding that if they want to win *prize of the week* or have *golden time*, they must take

responsibility for themselves and follow the rules: good behaviour, good manners and good learning being necessary criteria for these rewards. Pupils understand the need to be considerate to one another, taking turns and treating each other well. Whilst at play, pupils show excellent awareness of expectations and the importance of positive behaviour, with a particular emphasis on being kind to one another and seeking adult help if there are problems. Pupils with SEND respectfully raise their hands and wait to be asked to speak, respecting the wishes of others when choosing work partners. Pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour and understand that there are consequences for negative actions. In the questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour and all parents felt that their children learn in a safe environment.

- 5.20 Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of social collaboration and their respect for each other is evident across ages and abilities. Older pupils are eager to support and help younger pupils at break and during lessons. They form productive relationships towards common goals, for example in a group discussion with inspectors, one pupil quietly whispered encouragement in the ear of another, less confident pupil, resulting in their greater involvement. Pupils with SEND, in the specialist alternative provision, play seamlessly with pupils from the main school. They are all socially very comfortable. Reception children collaborate in their year group and in mixed year groups, exploring independently, talking in pairs when sitting on a bench, climbing, and balancing, investigating the tunnels, and enjoying the freedom of running around with their friends. Older pupils were observed working effectively in teams in a variety of activities, including creating science presentations, the house basketball competition and in the small and passionate orchestra. Their use of laptop devices enables creative and effective collaboration over the internet. In the questionnaires, the vast majority of parents felt that the school equips their children with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.
- 5.21 Pupils make valuable contributions to the lives of others, the school, and the wider community. They are aware of the need to be excellent role models and, through positions such as *ambassadors for change*, membership of the eco committee and taking on responsibilities as house captains, pupils are enabled to make a positive impact on the lives of their peers. They express how much enjoyment they get and relish the opportunity to gain organisational skills and to learn how to deal sensitively with younger children. Pupils further contribute to the school community through their participation in sports fixtures, drama, and musical events, and organising activities for younger children at breaktimes, demonstrating empathy and kindness in their outdoor learning. Annual visits to sing in a local nursing home are much enjoyed by pupils, who added 'It's nice to cheer up people who may be sad.' Pupils speak proudly of the money they raise to support local, national, and international charities and their annual involvement in litter picking along local canals contributes to their keenly felt environmental credentials.
- 5.22 Pupils show great respect for each other, their own cultures and those of others. Their cultural awareness is developed through the curriculum and pupils celebrate festivals from the major world faiths throughout the year in assemblies. In a religious studies lesson, pupils with SEND recognise the cross and explain why it is important to Christians. Some pupils share experiences from their faiths with other members of the school community. For example, Reception children demonstrate their knowledge that not all families are the same and can be made up of different people. They know that everyone is welcome in their community and understand the meaning of diversity, demonstrating excellent levels of sensitivity and tolerance. Senior pupils with SEND are accepting of each another's anxieties and offer appropriate time and space. In discussion, junior school pupils said that all pupils are well-supported when they enter the school so that they settle quickly. Pupils speak about their initial concerns about being perceived as different but that they quickly feel happy and are accepted at the school. Pupils' development of tolerance and understanding is supported by the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme, assemblies and acknowledgement and participation of national awareness days. Pupils are accepting of trans, gender-fluid and non-binary pupils and wear badges to show their support. Membership of the LGBTQ+ club is highly valued. Whilst not a broadly ethnically diverse school, pupils recognise that its pupils are neuro-diverse and that the value of each and every one of them is of equal importance. In the questionnaires, the overwhelming

majority of parents felt that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect, and tolerance of other people.

- 5.23 Pupils understand about staying safe online and know who to turn to if they are concerned. They speak freely and knowledgeably about the dos and don'ts of online life and understand the actions they should take to manage situations which may arise, for example, closing down the screen if something inappropriate appears. Younger pupils are clear about the concept of trusted adults and what can be shared with them. Pupils spoke positively about the role that PSHE and assemblies play in raising their awareness of online safety. Pupils understand very well the importance of healthy eating and appreciate the school's efforts to provide wholesome food. Pupils appreciate the value of healthy eating and use the school council as a means to bring about changes to menus and other aspects of school life to enable them to be healthy and safe. Pupils reasoned that a broad and balanced diet was healthier and could explain this thought process fully and logically. Pupils understand the importance of being physically healthy and spoke enthusiastically about the sports programme and pupils, including those with SEND, understand the rules about safety when using apparatus in the science laboratory. They understand the need to keep fit and value the opportunities at lunch times as well as in games lessons to take exercise, looking forward to sessions where fitness levels are measured so that personal targets can be set. Pupils are aware of the benefits of positive mental health and discussion around this topic is encouraged from an early age. They highly appreciate the wellbeing room and feel that access to this important aspect of school life 'totally supports them' in terms of their mental health.

6. Inspection Evidence

- 6.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chairman of the local advisory board, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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 Alexander Mitchell	Reporting inspector
Dr Gerard Silverlock	Compliance team inspector (Retired headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Clare Bruce	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr David Fotheringham	Team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Moyra Thompson	Team inspector for EYFS (Head, ISA school)