

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

Kingswood School

October 2022

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School's Details

School	Kingswood Scho	ol		
DfE number	800/6000			
Registered charity number	309148			
Address	Kingswood School			
	Lansdown Road			
	Bath			
	Somerset			
	BA1 5RG			
Telephone number	01225 734200			
Email address	reception@kingswood.bath.sch.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Gordon-Brown			
Chair of governors	Mr Tim Lindsay			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	855			
	Day pupils	683	Boarders	172
	Middle School	620	Sixth Form	235
Inspection dates	18 to 20 October 2022			

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Kingswood School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. Founded by John Wesley in the 18th century, it moved to its present location in Bath in the 1850s. The school is a registered charity, overseen by a board of governors. The school is an associated member of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust and retains a Christian ethos. The school's junior house for Years 7 and 8 is mixed gender and includes both boarding and day pupils. The six senior houses are single gender, four of them include boarders and day pupils while the other two are day only houses.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to provide the highest quality of holistic education that meets the needs of the individual child. It seeks to encourage confidence, open-mindedness and tolerance along with creativity and a spirit of enquiry. The intention is to ensure that pupils' academic achievement takes place in the context of all-round personal development, in which high standards are combined with a sense of personal responsibility and service.

About the pupils

1.3 Most pupils are from professional families and live within a 25-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 176 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 45 receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Of the 76 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), 47 receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school have identified 293 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them. They include pupils who have talents in creative arts, music and sport.

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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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.

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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> 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 In the middle school and sixth form, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm 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 and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 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, 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.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils have high levels of academic achievement and are very successful in a wide range of other areas.
 - Pupils' communication skills and mathematical competence, as well as their knowledge and understanding in other subjects, are excellent.
 - Pupils develop and draw upon highly sophisticated study skills from an early age.
 - Pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to learning, working diligently and collaboratively to achieve their goals.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils have a strong record of support for other pupils in and beyond the local community.
 - Pupils fully appreciate the importance of diversity and value it highly.
 - Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of self-confidence, resilience and self-esteem.
 - Pupils have a strong sense of morality. They mix well and are mutually very supportive within the school's strong boarding community.
 - Pupils contribute extremely well to the smooth running of the school.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
 - Ensure that pupils' achievement is enhanced still further by sharing the practice that characterises
 the most successful teaching by making more use of discussions to further strengthen pupils'
 understanding.

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 attained very highly at A level in 2022, with a large majority of the results at A* or A grades. This strong attainment is consistent with the centre-assessed and teacher-assessed outcomes in 2020 and 2021, when a majority of entries were awarded one of the top two grades, and a quarter were at A* or equivalent. These high standards, as well as those achieved in GCSE, result from the pupils' diligence, perseverance and excellent attitudes to study, the very strong pastoral care in the school

and the consistently strong teaching. In 2022, the large majority of results in GCSE were at the top three grades. In 2020 and 2021, in the centre-assessed and teacher-assessed assessments, nearly three-quarters of GCSE results were at the highest three grades, with just over a half at the top two. Assessment data show that almost all pupils achieve significantly higher examination grades than expected at both GCSE and A level. This represents strong progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding over time. Most pupils achieve places at universities, including those with the most demanding entry criteria, in a wide range of courses. Pupils make rapid progress across all subjects. In each year group, pupils with SEND and EAL make excellent progress, achieving similar standards to those of their peers. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents agreed that their children's individual educational needs are met effectively. Inspection evidence supports this view.

- 3.6 Pupils' achievement is excellent in a wide variety of activities beyond their academic studies. There are opportunities for them to participate in a range of clubs ranging from canoeing to croquet and from jewellery-making to jazz orchestra so that their individual interests are well served. Pupils' selfconfidence grows as they gain valuable experience by performing in choirs, orchestras and musical ensembles, both in school and at events such as the Bath Festival. The pupils achieve well in instrumental examinations, the majority of candidates over the past two years having gained merit or distinction levels. During the last year, pupils have successfully competed at regional, national and international levels in a range of sports and activities, including international dance, hockey, martial arts and orienteering. National representation has included equestrian sports, golf, rugby and swimming. Many pupils have competed at regional level in sports such as cricket, cross-country running and netball. Pupils are successful in science Olympiads, in an online national mathematics challenge and in philosophy competitions. A large majority of middle pupils have achieved success at bronze, silver and gold levels in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) Scheme. These successes result from considerable investment by governors and senior leaders in providing facilities and specialist staff. Pupils value the support given to them by staff and work hard to appreciate and fulfil with commitment the school's aims and values.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate an extensive range of skills, knowledge and understanding well beyond agerelated expectations. For example, in a geography lesson, lower school pupils demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of the challenges of protecting the coastal defences in Swanage in relation to the financial cost. Similarly in a sixth form business studies lesson, pupils were able to draw critically on prior knowledge about labour markets in the UK and to make comparisons with international markets. In mathematics, middle school pupils demonstrated an excellent understanding of the manipulation and solution of equations which contained fractional coefficients. Occasionally, the pace of learning is rather relaxed and pupils do not always have sufficient time for discussion to develop stronger understanding. Pupils apply their knowledge and skills effectively and take great delight in solving complex questions. Work for the sixth form Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) shows that pupils have carried out high-quality individual research, such as when preparing a presentation to parents about the use of plus-size models in the fashion industry. Pupils delivered their presentation with fluency and insight, exploring both the moral and commercial dimensions of the decisions made in marketing campaigns for the fashion industry. Pupils drew on their extensive knowledge and understanding to produce arguments for and against the ways that people were represented by the fashion industry.
- 3.8 Pupils' significant progress in mathematics is underpinned by their excellent attainment and enthusiastic engagement with mathematical concepts. For example, middle school pupils worked collaboratively to investigate the rate of thermal energy transfer by radiation. Using the temperature readings taken every 15 minutes, they were able to plot and show their findings using a bar graph. Younger lower school pupils used their excellent mathematical understanding to produce a musical composition based on the rhythmic speech patterns of the names of London Underground stations. Here pupils took great delight in performing their compositions to their class and reading from

- complex rhythmical music notation that they had written, which often involved semi-quavers and triplets.
- 3.9 Pupils, including those who have SEND and EAL, are highly confident and articulate communicators. This is largely due to leaders' successful establishment of a culture of enthusiasm for public performance. Pupils demonstrate excellent speaking and listening skills. For example, in drama, sixth form pupils displayed excellent collaborative listening skills and mirror working when they performed their 'boom-chica-boom' warm-up exercise, prior to the start of the lesson. Pupils are confident listeners, speakers, readers and writers in their study of foreign languages. For example, in a French lesson, middle school pupils confidently practised their speaking skills by changing present-tense sentences into the past, using parts of avoir and être. They displayed strong technical knowledge in using reflexive verbs. In their English books, middle school pupils demonstrated high level writing skills when they were analysing two poems about the natural world by Seamus Heaney. Here they explored the themes within the poems in a nuanced and comprehensive way by forensically examining the verse structure and imagery. Pupils become fluent and expressive readers supported by the consistent promotion of a love of reading. For example, during a chapel assembly, sixth form pupils read a passage from the Bible (Romans 14, 1–12), to lower-school pupils. The sixth formers read sensitively with good intonation and expression conveying well the key message that we should not make judgements on the basis of the differences between us. In the course of the inspection, almost a quarter of the pupils participated in group discussions with inspectors. During these conversations they demonstrated an openness of spirit in agreeing with as well as challenging each other and the school, often drawing freely on their personal experiences. They articulated their answers lucidly and politely, showing a mature perspective on the wide range of topics under consideration. They are keen for their voices to be heard within the school and are accepting that there are often different points of view.
- 3.10 Pupils are very proficient users of information and communication technology (ICT). For example, in a sixth form art lesson, pupils skilfully manipulated images by using Photoshop confidently and skilfully. They successfully deployed a complicated layering technique to blend different photographs and paintings of flowers to create a composite artwork showing flowers at different stages of imagined decay. Similarly, in a geography lesson, middle school pupils conducted online research into the benefits and drawbacks of investing in the production of sustainable chocolate. Pupils used their well-honed digital skills to create highly imaginative presentations using animation, film clips, photographs and graphical analysis.
- 3.11 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They demonstrate a strong appetite for industry and hard work and are engaged and focused on their learning. They develop an excellent range of study skills. In a physical education lesson, middle school pupils used the internet to research ways, such as weight training, fartlek training and high intensity plyometrics, in which they could improve their fitness levels. From this research they successfully designed specific programmes to improve aspects of their fitness, for example carrying out high-weight and low-repetition exercises if bench press is a weakness. Pupils are happy to work independently and show great resilience and determination to persevere, even when things become more challenging. In a sixth form politics lesson, pupils worked collaboratively to evaluate the hypothesis that the powers of the Prime Minister undermine parliamentary sovereignty. The pupils listened carefully to each other's opinions, were not judgemental and clearly demonstrated the ability to analyse and synthesise a wide range of information in order to reach a balanced viewpoint. Sixth form EPQ projects feature careful research and analysis, such as in a pastiche piano composition reflecting the lyrical melodic style and accompaniment of Chopin's Nocturnes. Pupils develop excellent organisational skills. This enables them to manage demanding workloads and meet deadlines.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

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

- 3.13 Pupils' self-confidence, self-discipline, self-esteem, self-knowledge and resilience are excellent. This can be seen in the way pupils take advantage of the opportunities afforded to them to apply their own initiative and autonomy. For example, sixth form pupils have set up their own 'eco-alliance' group. In discussion, representatives from the group felt that they are making a real difference in improving the school's response and support for ecological and sustainable causes, such as ocean preservation and reducing carbon emissions. They also believe that leaders listen to them and provide a strong platform on which to suggest ideas. Younger lower school pupils displayed an outstanding level of understanding because of the effective guidance they receive about dealing with individual problems and in making decisions such as choices of subject options. Pupils across the school are reflective and resilient in many ways, such as new boarders' confident settling in. Those who board show strong selfawareness in their approach to maintaining friendships and to mental health issues. The school's boarding environment fosters supportive 'sibling' relationships which are further strengthened through events such as Friday 'family night'. Boarders and day pupils alike value the support given to them by staff and work hard to appreciate and fulfil with commitment the school's aims and values so that they learn to understand their place in the world.
- 3.14 Pupils develop a mature and strong awareness of what is right and wrong. They confidently challenge any unfairness when they encounter it and the large majority say they feel comfortable in self-referring their concerns through a variety of channels. Pupils of all ages are keen to debate moral issues in lessons. For example, in a business studies lesson, sixth form pupils talked openly about poor working conditions. During a discussion of management styles, they examined forensically the ethics of a global company that specialises in the delivery of a wide variety of goods. The debate centred on their understanding of practices in relation to staff breaks and zero hours contracts. Similarly in a history lesson, lower school pupils considered whether the formation of the British Empire was morally right or wrong. In their daily lives in school too, pupils have a good understanding about right and wrong actions. In an A-level economics lesson, sixth-form pupils demonstrated excellent understanding of the implications of tax percentages, the recent mini-budget and the government's subsequent change of course. They critically analysed and confidently worked out the percentage contributions for different tax brackets and considered the moral and ethical dilemmas of the UK tax system.
- 3.15 Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, both physically and mentally. They display outstanding awareness of online safety. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire asserted that they know how to stay safe online. They develop a mature awareness of issues which arise during adolescence, including understanding of consent, strategies for navigating complex social boundaries and keeping safe in personal relationships. Pupils have a strong awareness of how to support their mental health and older ones discuss their concerns in a confident and mature way. Pupils across the school know that it is important to get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate an excellent appreciation of non-material aspects of life through music, art, dance and drama. For example, during chapel pupils sang with feeling Carter's *Lord of the Dance*. In a lesson about Humanism and Christianity, middle-school pupils produced some excellent examples of extended writing on the topic. Here they composed well-crafted arguments on such questions as 'Can a humanist be good without God?' This enabled them to reflect on and explore the morality of right versus wrong. In a photography lesson, middle school pupils maturely reflected on their previous work using photographic portraits. Here they were able to synthesise several different artistic media and styles, including cubism, into high quality collage artwork, reflecting their deep aesthetic appreciation.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the importance of making informed decisions. They are clear that the decisions they make now about their learning, behaviour and friendships are likely to affect their prospects. Pupils said that they are given effective guidance that helps them improve their organisation, planning and timekeeping skills. This enables them to strike a well-judged balance between school commitments and recreational activities and so help to ensure their good physical

and mental health. Boarders appreciate the need to make sensible decisions on a daily and weekly basis to ensure they have a healthy balance of academic and social activities. They understand what is necessary to enable them to live harmoniously within the boarding community. Pupils have many opportunities throughout the school day to develop their independence through reflection and decision making. For example, some pupils asked to start a Pride group to provide LGBTQ+ peers with a safe space and a group of peers to whom they are able to relate. The outcomes have been excellent; the group is thriving and well attended.

- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate a keen sense of social development, collaboration and contribution to others and the community. Throughout the school, caring for others is part of the ethos. The pupils work together effectively in solving problems to achieve shared goals. For example, in a biology lesson, sixth form students cooperated to investigate the effect of variables on the rate of diffusion. They then presented their findings to their peers, stating which variable they had changed and why. Older pupils provide practical help for members of the local community, including visits to primary schools. They also play a significant role in supporting the staff in the mentoring of younger pupils. Across the school young people take great pride in contributing to society by raising money for several charities based in the UK and overseas, that they choose. In their discussion with inspectors, pupils were clear that the school's boarding house system and strong family ethos encourages a strong sense of belonging and provides pupils with many opportunities to work with and learn from each other. Across the school pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles, such as prefects and sports captains. These enable them to make an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- 3.19 Pupils develop an excellent understanding about other cultures and the diversity of societies in subjects across the curriculum as well as from the different cultures represented among the school population. Pupils develop an outstanding awareness of different cultures and religious customs, for example, by learning about Diwali during assembly, bullying within Christianity and the persecution of Jews in Judaism at different times during their history. For example, in an EPQ essay about the Hollywood studio system during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, pupils demonstrated excellent awareness of culture and diversity, as well as understanding of the struggles of black female actors. Older pupils mentioned to inspectors, that they very much appreciated a senior leader's assembly entitled: 'What it means to be a real man'. Pupils wholeheartedly welcomed the presentation on masculinity, because it challenged their understanding of stereotypes related to identity and gender issues. The middle pupils who are active in the LGBTQ+ and Afro-Caribbean societies are highly articulate and influential role models for the school. They demonstrate a deep understanding of the key themes and debates regarding diversity and cultural awareness. Pupils are respectful of diversity within the community and are prepared to have open discussions about religion, ethnicity, gender, and disability. This is because leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted vigorously across the school and with very positive results.

Inspection Evidence 13

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff, the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extracurricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses, 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 David Scott Reporting inspector

Mr Russell Slatford Compliance team inspector (Former headmaster, SofH school)

Mrs Christine Cunniffe Team inspector for boarding (Principal, SofH, ISA and BSA school)

Mrs Denise Hammersley Team inspector for boarding (Head of boarding, HMC and BSA school)

Mr Neal Parker Team inspector (Head, HMC school)

Dr Michael Yates Team inspector (Head of science, HMC school)