



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Lime House School

January 2020



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School's Details

School	Lime House School			
DfE number	909/6001			
Address	Lime House School Holm Hill Dalston Carlisle Cumbria CA5 7BX			
Telephone number	01288 710225			
Email address	headteacher@limehouseschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Robertson-Barnett			
Proprietors	Mr N Rice, Mrs D Rice and Mrs J Fisher (Genwise)			
Age range	7 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	179			
	Day pupils	53	Boarders	126
	Juniors	15	Seniors	81
	Sixth Form	83		
Inspection dates	21 to 23 January 2020			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Lime House School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 7 and 18 years. It is owned, governed and managed by three proprietors, one the former headmaster. The school comprises a junior school and senior school on the same site, with some shared facilities. There are five boarding houses, three for males and two for females.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1899 and has been on its present site in a rural location since 1946. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new head teacher, in 2017. The school opened a new boarding house in 2019.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to provide good quality education that allows pupils to achieve their full potential, and to be successful, happy and confident, prepared for life beyond school.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The majority of senior school pupils are boarders and come from a number of different countries, predominantly from mainland China or Hong Kong. Day pupils are often from farming backgrounds and live locally. Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 25 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, and emotional needs. All of these pupils receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 99 pupils. Their needs are largely supported by their classroom teachers; 81 receive additional lessons.
- 1.5 The school's data indicate that the ability of pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with those taking the same tests nationally. The school does not select pupils by ability on entry and does not categorise any particular group of pupils as being 'gifted or talented'.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

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 a combined inspection 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, including the boarding NMS, 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.

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 a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as met or as not met. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. 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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2017 to 2019 performance has been in line with the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2017 to 2019 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. The prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 Boarders' views are actively encouraged. Some senior boarders and prefects reported in discussion that they feel their serious concerns are sometimes not listened to. Inspection evidence shows that their opinions and concerns are not always appropriately considered by all staff. A minority of pupils in their questionnaire responses echoed this view.
- 2.9 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in paragraphs 5 and NMS 19 are met but those in NMS 17 (securing boarders' views) are not met.**

Action point 1

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school must ensure that boarders' views are listened to effectively [NMS 17.1] |
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PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, but these do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; requirements relating to fire safety are met and provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.11 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 and access to a programme of activities.

- 2.12 The school has not conducted the required checks on all the staff it employs. The required checks on sports coaches have not all been conducted. A satisfactory check on prohibition from teaching for the sports coaches was conducted during the inspection.
- 2.13 Boarding staff are not appropriately trained because, although there is provision for a two-day initial trial period, there is no evidence of any written induction programme for boarding staff, no system for regular review of their work and no planned programme for their continued professional development.
- 2.14 The school does not make appropriate arrangements to provide long-term lodgings for some boarders. During the school holiday periods the school uses an agency to provide guardians for most boarders, but appoints a small number of guardians itself. It does not carry out regular checks on these guardian families and lodgings.
- 2.15 The school does not carry out a suitable review of security and take effective action. It does not conduct all required checks to comply with relevant legislation, particularly on the water and electricity supplies, including checks for the presence of legionella.
- 2.16 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraph 9, paragraph 10 and paragraphs 12 to 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 2–4, 7–10, 12 and 16 are met; but those in paragraph 7 (the safeguarding of pupils), paragraph 8 (the safeguarding of boarders), paragraph 11 (health and safety) and the standards in NMS 6 (safety of boarders), NMS 11 (child protection), NMS 15 (staff supervision), and NMS 20.1 and 20.4 - 20.9 (lodgings) are not met.**

Action point 2

- The school must ensure that it conducts the correct checks on all the staff it appoints, prior to starting work, including sports coaches, in particular with regard to checks on prohibition from teaching, references and employment history, as required by *Keeping Children Safe in Education* [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8(a) and (b) and NMS 11]

Action point 3

- The school must ensure that it provides a suitable induction programme for new boarding staff, conducts regular reviews of their work and provides a programme and training for their continued professional development [NMS 15.1 and, for the same reason, paragraph 8 (a) and (b)]

Action point 4

- The school must ensure that it makes suitable arrangements for lodgings by ensuring that they provide satisfactory accommodation and supervision, are checked before use, and are monitored by the school during use including checks at least yearly;
- they should be of a comparable standard to accommodation provided by the school. The school should interview the adult who will be responsible for the accommodation of the pupils in each lodging, take up references and record a satisfactory assessment before any pupil is placed there;
- they must be able to demonstrate that members of the host family aged over 16 are subject to a DBS check completed at the standard level, with a satisfactory outcome known before any pupil is placed there;
- they must ensure that all adults providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf have undergone safeguarding training that is updated regularly as advised by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and that they understand the school's policy in relation to pupils going missing and their role in implementing that policy;

- the school must have a satisfactory written agreement with each adult providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf; providing satisfactory written guidance to host families accommodating pupils on behalf of the school, covering the school's policy and practice for lodging pupils;
- discuss with each pupil separately, at least termly, their lodgings, recording the pupil's assessment in writing and taking action on any concerns or complaints [NMS 20.1; 20.4; 20.5; 20.6; 20.7; 20.8 and 20.9, and, for the same reason, paragraph 8 (b)]

Action point 5

- the school must ensure the safety of pupils, by carrying out a suitable review of security and taking effective action; and by conducting all regular tests to comply with relevant legislation, on the water and electricity supplies, including checks for the presence of legionella [paragraph 11; NMS 6.1 and 6.2, and, for the same reason, paragraph 8 (b)]

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

2.17 The school keeps a suitable register of the checks it conducts on staff and conducts suitable checks on its proprietors. However, the school does not make appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of all its staff. It has not conducted all the required checks on sports coaches including a declaration of medical fitness. The school's arrangements for guardianship are not suitably managed, as the school has not conducted checks on those guardians it appoints itself, nor on any adult members of their household.

2.18 Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised.

2.19 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 20 and 21 are met, but those in paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(3), 18(2)(f) and NMS 14.1, 14.5 and 14.6 [suitability of staff and guardians] are not met.

Action point 6

- the school must conduct the required checks on all the staff it employs to ensure their suitability to work with children, including boarders, in a timely manner, including a declaration of medical fitness for sports coaches [paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(3) and 18(2)(f); NMS 14.1]

Action point 7

- The school must conduct the required checks on guardians it appoints, including on those over 16 living in their accommodation [paragraph 18(2)(f); NMS 14.1, 14.5 and 14.6]

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.20 Suitable changing facilities, and showering facilities and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical needs are provided. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.21 Suitable toilet arrangements are not available. Inspectors noted during the inspection that the toilets in the junior school were not being used solely by the children. The premises are not maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; the school has not conducted the checks on water supply required by the Health and Safety Executive: there have been no checks for legionella bacteria for several years. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders in most areas but a security matter was brought to the attention of the school.

- 2.22** The regulations relating to the premises and accommodation in paragraphs 24, 26, 27 and paragraph 29 are met, but those in paragraphs 23 (toilets), 25 (maintenance), 28 (water supply), 30 and NMS 5 (boarding accommodation) are not met.

Action point 8

- the school must ensure that toilets provided for pupils are for their sole use [paragraph 23(1)(a)]

Action point 9

- the school must ensure that the distribution of water is subject to regular testing for legionella bacteria, as required by the Health and Safety Executive [paragraph 28(1)(b)]

Action point 10

- the school must have regard to standard 5 (accommodation) of the NMS for boarding schools by ensuring access to boarding areas is suitably controlled [paragraphs 25, 30 and NMS 5.7]

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.23** A range of information is variously 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.

- 2.24** The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.25** 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.

- 2.26** The standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.27** The proprietors have not ensured that all those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role; that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively, and that they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils, so that the school meets the independent school standards consistently.

- 2.28** The school has a suitable written policy outlining its procedures to safeguard children, which has regard to the latest statutory guidance and staff have been trained in these procedures. However, leaders and managers do not always implement these procedures effectively, including in checking staff, guardians and lodgings it arranges, to ensure that children's well-being is ensured. Measures to

promote health and safety, including in boarding, are deficient in some areas and required documentation in boarding is not all kept.

2.29 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management) and NMS 13 (management of boarding) are not met.

Action point 11

- the school must improve the quality of leadership and management throughout the school, including in boarding, so that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate sufficient skills and knowledge to ensure that the school meets the independent school standards consistently and actively promotes the well-being of children [paragraph 34 (1)(a), (b) and (c); and NMS 13.1 to 5]

Action point 12

- the school must keep all required documentation relating to boarding, including documents specific to guardianship and the provision of lodgings [NMS 13.7 to 13.9]

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.

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

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates 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 the national inspectorate, 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'.

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 good.

- Pupils throughout the school achieve well across a good range of academic subjects, fulfilling the school's aims; those with EAL make rapid progress in English, underpinning their academic success.
- Pupils' attainment at A level is excellent, enabling pupils to gain places at university, including those institutions which are highly selective.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning, reflected in high levels of self-motivation.
- Pupils' wider successes, including in creative and aesthetic areas, are few.
- Pupils' independent study skills are restricted in scope and development by limited opportunities to fully develop them.

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

- Pupils are highly self-aware, confident and keen to succeed.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they show respect for others.
- Pupils' moral understanding is well developed, guiding their actions within and beyond school.
- Pupils are good, collaborative learners.
- Boarders' personal development is restricted because the boarding environment promotes their organisational skills, but provides few opportunities for leadership or independence beyond this.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Promote pupils' independence in their learning further, including the application of information and communication technology (ICT) skills across subjects and drawing on wider sources for learning.
- Improve pupils' cultural, aesthetic and creative development by increasing opportunities in these areas across the school.
- Further pupils' personal development by improving the boarding experience, through building a greater sense of community and developing the links between day and boarding life.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 During the period 2017 to 2019, results in A-level examinations were above the national average and those in 2019 show significant improvement. Pupils' attainment at A level is excellent, with over half of pupils' results in 2019 at grades A* or A. Pupils also achieve well in a small number of vocational qualifications, for example, in ICT. This enables nearly all pupils, including those with SEND, to proceed to university, often at universities with highly selective entry requirements, with the majority moving to their first choice of institution. Pupils' attainment over time in GCSE is good. Over the period 2017 to 2019 GCSE results have been in line with those nationally. In 2019 attainment at GCSE was well above that of maintained schools. Since September 2019 less academically able pupils can follow a pathway programme leading to alternative accreditation, with routes into further study. It is too early to judge the results of this new curriculum initiative, but inspectors noted the positive impact on pupils' interest and motivation to succeed, because of their heightened enjoyment of lessons. The

provision of subjects, such as law, for individual pupils at a nearby local maintained school and very small GCSE classes in school, such as in Italian and music, allow all pupils to succeed because they can study subjects they are interested in and for which they show aptitude. Pupils with SEND progress on a par with their peers, because of a well-structured programme to support them and because teachers set suitable tasks in lessons that match their various needs.

- 3.6 Pupils make good progress in the junior section of the school, from their various starting points. Firm foundations are laid in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Internal testing at the end of Year 6 shows that pupils attain at least in line with those sitting similar tests nationally. Pupils with SEND also make good progress, as they are supported well. All pupils at this age benefit from teaching which shows high levels of skill in planning and delivering lessons that meet the individual needs of the mixed age range of pupils, who are taught in a single class from age 7 to age 11.
- 3.7 These successes throughout the school are achieved because pupils are taught well and show excellent attitudes to learning, often asking for additional work. Teaching is highly skilled in transmitting knowledge and enthusiasm to pupils, encouraging them to work hard and to persevere. It creates excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Data provided by the school show that in some years, pupils' progress is more rapid than is expected nationally.
- 3.8 There are relatively few successes, however, in creative or aesthetic areas, although such subjects are gaining greater prominence at the school following recent senior leadership appointments. A structured activities programme has been introduced which has begun to result in greater participation and interest in sports, arts and music. This programme directs pupils towards learning new skills and embarking on varied leisure opportunities, to go alongside their academic work. Pupils commented favourably to inspectors on being able to try their hand at new hobbies which they would not have previously considered, or were worried would take too much time out from academic study. Twelve pupils have gained silver level in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme. A few individual pupils are successful in other activities, beyond the academic curriculum, for example in competitions at local level in music. A pupil rock band won the local 'Battle of the bands' competition. Members of sports teams compete with other independent schools, in hockey, soccer and basketball.
- 3.9 Pupils with EAL make rapid progress in acquiring the skills they need in English in order to be successful in their academic subjects, as the medium for teaching is English and the use of English is encouraged throughout the day. Enabled by teaching which accurately pitches the level of language used in questioning, pupils acquire the technical vocabulary needed for each subject, such as in science or mathematics. In a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson for younger pupils about mental health, pupils were able to discuss their personal responses and viewpoints successfully because teaching had checked that key vocabulary, such as 'dementia' and 'resilience' was understood by all. However, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the skills of some senior pupils are not good when presenting their work in a number of subjects other than English.
- 3.10 Pupils' communication skills are good overall. Pupils speak eloquently and confidently. Non-native speakers of English are able to articulate their views. Sixth-form pupils spoke clearly and convincingly, with passion and insight, about the depth of characterisation in Shakespeare, comparing characters from *Othello* with those from *The Tempest*. Younger senior school pupils readily engaged in debate about how the world population may change in the future, with strong contributions from EAL pupils. Pupils listened to each other politely. Effective open-ended questioning allowed more able students the chance to give more sophisticated answers, describing the global birth to death ratio. Competent speakers use a wide range of vocabulary and idiom, and older pupils show good, fluent command of English when expressing their opinion. Pupils' rapid progress in English reflects the emphasis placed on this in the curriculum. Parents in their questionnaire replies were highly satisfied with the progress their children make. In the junior school, writing skills are well developed, as seen in pupils' own versions of the Chinese New Year story, which use a wide range of vocabulary, punctuation and varied sentence structure, and are presented well.

- 3.11 Many pupils make excellent progress in mathematics and sciences because staff encourage and support their identified talents in these fields. Pupils' numeracy skills across the school are strong and they apply their skills highly successfully in other subjects. In the junior school, pupils used co-ordinates to solve problems, and in the senior school in sciences, used formulae competently in chemistry to calculate the concentration of a solution. In physics they used graphs of load and extension in a metal spring successfully in physics. Individual pupils excel, for example in applying mathematics to robotics. Pupils' scientific skills are strong, showing excellent organisational skills in practical work, leading them to make valid conclusions to experiments. Highly-able pupils participate successfully in national physics and mathematics challenges and Olympiads. The school's Lego coding team have reached the 2019 regional coding finals in a local university.
- 3.12 Pupils are competent in ICT, with some individual pupils excelling. Junior school pupils created an e-book linked to British values and have learned how to use email correctly. In GCSE computer science, pupils readily completed the gaps in pseudocode to ensure that programming statements made sense, demonstrating a high-level grasp of this material. Whilst researching organisational structures in business, A-level business pupils adeptly used a word processing programme to build a screen-based organisation chart, drawing on a business they had researched. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to use and apply ICT skills on a regular basis across all subjects. As a result, pupils miss out on opportunities to draw on wider sources and strategies for furthering their learning, researching or presenting work.
- 3.13 Pupils' attitudes to learning, and their behaviour in lessons, are excellent. They are attentive, enthusiastic and work hard. Pupils are courteous and respectful and as result, the atmosphere for learning in the school is very positive, reflecting the fact that senior staff and teachers model these values well. Pupils are highly focused on study; they organise themselves well, commenting that the boarding environment has helped them by promoting this self-organisation, and is thus preparing them well for university. Pupils in the junior school develop their study skills through project work. Senior pupils can synthesise information with some success, for example analysing accurately the role of German naval expansion in the build up to the First World War in GCSE history, taking good account of the competing factors at work. Pupils' independent study skills are limited in scope and development. Boarders use the ICT room in the evenings, and both boarders and day pupils in daytime, in free periods, if it is not being used for teaching, and they use laptops in the evening. However, there is no library, resource centre or common study room. This limits the development and scope of pupils' independent study skills.

The quality of pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.15 Pupils' good personal development is assured because the school meets individual pupils' needs well, for example in adjusting curriculum to enable them to be happy and successful. School records and parental comments show that the school devotes considerable time to dialogue with parents in order to find mutually acceptable solutions that will best support pupils with SEND. This enables those pupils to blossom, by helping to remove emotional barriers to learning, such as anxiety. The proprietors have ensured that planning to meet pupils' needs, and the rigour of the school's self-evaluation processes for future school development have improved since the last full educational inspection in 2014.
- 3.16 Pupils recognise that they are making good progress. They are strongly self-aware and are highly motivated to succeed. In this, they rightly acknowledge the good support provided by their teachers, and by boarding staff. However, pupils' ability to improve their own learning is hindered at times because the quality of marking is variable, with a lack of consistent written feedback given. Pupils have good, age appropriate decision-making skills. Younger pupils make successful decisions about their own development, such as choosing food and activities. The choices of older pupils are led by the desire for academic success. Pupils are highly conscious of the importance of the decisions they make

in relation to their future studies and careers. Support structures in place, such as A-level taster courses help to inform their choices. Inspectors agree with pupils who responded in their questionnaires that they that they are well prepared for moving on to higher education.

- 3.17 Pupils' self-understanding and esteem are positively promoted from the outset, including in the junior school. On entry to examination years new boarders settle in well, supported by the school's swift help. Pupils comment on the friendliness in school, notwithstanding the occasional moments of dissension between different cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of diversity, because there are so many different nationalities living together in the school. There is a limited sense of one school community with a shared sense of purpose, in the boarding environment. Currently, the boarding and day parts of the school appear to run in parallel more than together, although day-to-day communications between the two parts operate efficiently. There are few examples of where boarding, though it has a positive impact through the care it provides, contributes much more to pupils' personal development beyond developing their self-organisational skills.
- 3.18 Pupils comment, rightly, on the calm, purposeful atmosphere in school, highly conducive to learning. Pupils work together collaboratively in lessons, from an early age, in class discussions and in solving problems, such as group science experiments. They recognise that by sharing ideas they may achieve better solutions than by working on their own. In geography, younger senior school pupils worked good-naturedly, and enthusiastically, helping one another as a whole-class team to successfully match flags to countries, in a 'race against the clock'. Pupils say that boarding particularly promotes the benefits of living and working together harmoniously.
- 3.19 Pupils' good social skills are promoted further through their involvement in the DofE programme and through their contribution to others. As part of the community module pupils often initiate and lead events to raise funds for local and national charities. Pupils understand the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and are moved to respond. Some pupils are active in the local community, for example, in a scheme to repair Lake District paths at weekends. Pupils show insight about leadership and service to their school community through their roles and responsibilities as prefects, and through groups, such as the eco club, leading initiatives on recycling bins and harvesting rain water for the school garden.
- 3.20 Pupils' moral skills are strong. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and understand the importance of school rules. Pupils are well aware of how important rules are in society and their behaviour reflects this in the considerate way they deal with others. Guidance from staff inside and outside of the classroom provides a moral compass, which guides pupils through their school career. Pupils readily articulate their views. For example, they were swift to speak out against a recently-introduced 'no touch' policy, but recognised the need, nevertheless, to respect and obey this. Boarders comment that staff care for them well, which helps them settle in, although some older pupils stated categorically that their concerns were too quickly dismissed by some staff and that suitable action was not always taken on issues raised. The school's leaders keep suitable records, which show that they do take action, but have not yet addressed this strongly-held perception about having effective channels for communication.
- 3.21 Pupils' spiritual understanding and awareness develop steadily through the PSHE and assembly programmes but are not overt features of school life. This is because there are too few planned opportunities in the curriculum aimed at developing pupils' spiritual awareness in a wider sense, for example through exposure to, and reflection on, the creative and aesthetic dimensions of life. Those pupils who have a particular faith are enabled to follow this, for example by attending a local church on Sundays.
- 3.22 Pupils' personal development has begun to be enhanced through development of their social skills and resilience by the programme of activities after school and at lunchtimes introduced since the previous inspection by the proprietors and senior leaders. The mandatory programme brings pupils together more often than in the recent past, to work in teams focused on a common goal, such as

staging a school concert in December 2019, with excerpts from the musical 'Frozen'. The programme is beginning to extend pupils' personal development through introducing a different kind of challenge in the form of taking up on new hobbies, like chess, yoga, choir, needlework and equestrian studies. Pupils' questionnaire responses and comments indicate that, although pupils are principally focused on academic success, they enjoy these activities, because they bring different groups and ages of pupils together.

- 3.23 Pupils understand and appreciate the importance of good habits for a healthy lifestyle. This awareness is fostered effectively through the PSHE programme, with topics designed to enhance pupils' well-being, and through assemblies and speakers. Pupils interviewed explained how the curriculum helps them to learn about stress management and sexual health. In biology, GCSE pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of a balanced diet in growing and repairing their bodies. As a result of the school's stress on both mental and physical well-being, pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe online. Junior school pupils know that it is important to try to lead a healthy lifestyle. They speak enthusiastically about sport offering a chance for exercise and having fun. Their health benefits from informal playing with a ball at break times, alongside formal physical education lessons and a weekly timetabled swimming session. Pupils openly criticised the provision of food in their questionnaires but inspectors note that they do have an input to menus. Menus often reflect majority cultural preferences.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with one of the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form registration time. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support area. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Honoree Gordon	Reporting inspector
Mr David Holland	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads and IAPS school) and team inspector, senior
Mr Robert Lilley	Team inspector, senior school (former Head of junior school, HMC school)
Mrs Valerie Holloway	Team inspector, junior school (former Head of kindergarten and nursery ,ISA school)
Mr Garry Binks	Team inspector for boarding and team inspector, senior school (former housemaster and head of faculty, HMC school)
Mr Colin Gunning	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy headmaster, HMC school)