



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Moor Park School

June 2019



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School's Details

School College	Moor Park School			
DfE number	893/6015			
Early Years registration number	EY294910			
Registered charity number	511800			
Address	Moor Park School Moor Park Richards Castle Ludlow Shropshire SY8 4DZ			
Telephone number	01584 876061			
Email address	head@moorpark.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Charlie Minogue			
Chair of governors	Mr Julian Rogers-Coltman			
Age range	0 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	240			
	Boys	116	Girls	124
	Day pupils	179	Boarders	61
	EYFS	95	Lower School Years 1 and 2	17
	Middle School	56	Upper School	72
Inspection dates	4 to 6 June 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Moor Park School is an independent day and boarding school for pupils from 3 months to 13 years. It was founded in 1964 on its current site. It became co-educational in the 1980s. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. Boarders are accommodated in two boarding houses.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new chair of governors, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has been moved entirely into the centre of the school, and a new performing arts centre has been opened.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school is rooted in Catholic principles but aims to welcome children and families of all faiths and beliefs. It seeks to give its pupils every opportunity to fulfil their potential, encourage them to think independently and creatively within and beyond the classroom. The school wishes its pupils to discover the interests, skills, and passions crucial in building rounded young people who are kind and look out for each other.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of local professional, business, and farming backgrounds, reflecting the cultural mix of rural Shropshire and neighbouring counties, with some boarding pupils coming from overseas, including from Spain. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 56 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 12 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers.

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. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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 unmet 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.

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](#), [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, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, the 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 uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.5 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. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.6 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.9 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 2–4, 6–12, 15, and 16 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. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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 pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include 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.
- 2.15 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.17 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.19 **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

- 2.20 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.21 All children make good or better progress in relation to their starting points. Staff ensure that children are well prepared for the next stage of learning and transitions are carefully managed.
- 2.22 The setting provides exceptional care to ensure that all children's needs are met. Staff cater for children with SEND, dietary and medical needs, working together with parents and outside agencies when necessary.
- 2.23 Leaders and staff give children's personal and emotional development high priority and are committed to ensuring that children feel safe and secure. Children are extremely happy and well looked after. They are treated as individuals and staff watch and listen carefully to babies and toddlers who can communicate their needs effectively. Consequently, children are keen to engage, participate in activities and follow behaviours modelled to them by staff.
- 2.24 Requirements for safeguarding and welfare are fully met. Leaders understand their responsibility and ensure that staff are up to date with training needs and aware of how to protect children.
- 2.25 The leadership and management team are committed to promoting continuous improvement. Since the previous inspection the nursery has relocated to allow EYFS rooms to be together as one unit, easing transition for the children. Leaders recognise the importance of giving the youngest children the best possible start in life and evaluate their practice regularly to achieve this aim. They have met the recommendation of the previous inspection to use the information provided by the electronic assessment system to communicate progress to parents more frequently.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.26 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.27 Leaders have an ambitious vision that is clearly demonstrated through a detailed and comprehensive development plan and their aim to improve outcomes for the children.
- 2.28 Highly effective systems are in place to improve staff practice. Termly meetings between leaders and individual staff ensure that staff have the opportunity to discuss areas to develop and build on existing strengths. Managers ensure that action points are routinely followed up and staff regularly attend training and development courses as a result. Mutual observations allow staff the opportunities to share expertise and develop their knowledge across the entire age range of the EYFS. Leaders actively encourage staff to benefit from these experiences and consequently key people introduce new ideas into their own practice.
- 2.29 Robust procedures are in place to ensure continuous evaluation of the quality of the provision and outcomes. Leaders seek the views of staff and parents through questionnaires and consider their responses carefully to ensure the setting continues to improve.
- 2.30 Staff and leaders are aware of statutory requirements and ensure learning programmes and the curriculum meet these, and the needs and interests of the children. Staff focus on the prime areas of learning for the youngest children and recognise children's next steps. All children are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning and the setting plans transitions between rooms with extreme care.
- 2.31 Leaders actively promote equality and diversity and ensure that these are integrated into daily routines. The children's behaviour is excellent, and staff are committed to encouraging sharing, good manners and making choices as they promote British values.

- 2.32 The arrangements to protect children meet all statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that all staff promote children's welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism. Safeguarding is a high priority and staff are well trained and aware of how to keep children safe.
- 2.33 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, and when speaking to parents, feedback was extremely positive. Parents say that individual needs are catered for and they trust staff to guide and reassure them as their children reach new developmental stages.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.34 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 2.35 Highly skilled staff have consistently high expectations of what children can achieve and are committed to ensuring that all children have equal opportunities and achieve their potential. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the age group they are working with and successfully engage children in activities that hold their interest and encourage them to interact.
- 2.36 Effective systems are in place to ensure baseline data are gathered on entry to the setting and from these staff plan children's next steps, taking into account parental information. Planning caters for individual needs and next steps and ensures all children make good progress and achieve well. Staff often work with children on a one-to-one basis and this provides them with a valuable insight into a child's learning needs and an opportunity to move their learning forward. For example, when a child was seen collecting plastic ducks, a member of staff encouraged her to count the ducks and then asked about a song she knew about ducks and whether they should sing it. The child then sat fully engaged with the staff member whilst they sang the song and moved the ducks in line with the lyrics.
- 2.37 Dedicated staff utilise every opportunity to interact with children and further their progress. They regularly encourage and praise children, who consequently show excellent focus and engagement in their activities. Staff and parents work in partnership to ensure children meet developmental milestones and staff support parents to achieve this.
- 2.38 Children benefit from the extensive outdoor areas and grounds by going for regular walks. The immediate outdoor area provides excellent opportunities for children to play with older EYFS children, and develop their social and communication skills but this area provides limited opportunities for exploration and creativity for under twos.
- 2.39 The setting ensures information is readily available to parents through welcome packs, display boards, daily communication books and also has an open door policy so parents can come and speak to staff. Parents feel incredibly well supported by staff, who they trust to know what their child needs and take their guidance with regard to the development of their child. Staff and parents celebrate children's achievements through 'wow' moments and these are displayed and incorporate the whole school's mindset values.
- 2.40 Staff ensure activities are accessible for all children and cater for individual needs, for example they changed cereal play to oats for a child with allergies. Equality and diversity are promoted within their daily practice. Staff introduce children to other languages and celebrate a range of Christian and other festivals and events.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.41 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.42 Leaders and staff are committed to ensuring that all children learn in a secure and caring environment which allows them to become independent and confident. Staff work together and communicate effectively to share their vision and encourage children to participate in activities.
- 2.43 Children enjoy their time in the setting and have exceptionally strong bonds with their key workers and other adults in the room, which gives them the confidence to explore their surroundings independently. Children happily play alongside each other, or with each other, and staff intervene to encourage sharing and promote good behaviour and manners. Staff encourage children to follow their interests and notice when young children crawl off to books, or to look out of the window, and give words to what they are doing and know when to further learning opportunities.
- 2.44 Leaders and staff have given careful thought to transitions, ensuring that children's emotional needs are met and that they are fully prepared for the next stage. Children have trial sessions and staff accompany children to the next room for these, or staff come and visit the child in their current room. Consequently, children are well-prepared to transition within the setting happily as they become familiar with staff and routines in their next room.
- 2.45 Children feel extremely safe, happy and secure owing to the strength of the relationships they have developed with staff. Members of staff know the children well and there is a highly effective key worker and buddy system in place. Children's well being is a priority and leaders give much thought to ensure their needs are still met when any staff are absent.
- 2.46 Children's attendance is effectively recorded as they are signed in and out and procedures are in place to follow up absences. Good attendance and behaviour are promoted at all times and staff quickly model and support children to ensure that they are learning to take turns, share and show respect towards each other.
- 2.47 Children enjoy their food and are offered balanced, nutritious meals and snacks at appropriate times during the day. Hand washing is a regular part of their routine and staff encourage children to understand the importance of hygiene and become more independent at meal times once they are out of a highchair.

Outcomes for children

- 2.48 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 2.49 All children make good progress from their various starting points and some children make rapid progress. Staff carefully record children's progress and monitor this to identify any areas where children may need more support or extension in their learning.
- 2.50 Children meet or exceed the expected level of development for their age. Staff actively encourage children to learn and children respond positively to their enthusiasm for activities. Young babies were seen crawling away from staff and exploring resources on the floor around. Older children play with other children in the house and are learning to share resources. Staff intervene when necessary to support or to extend the child's learning.
- 2.51 All children enjoy music and singing and staff frequently use songs to engage even the youngest babies. Baby 'sing and sign' is part of the daily routine and children happily listen and watch staff, joining in when they can. Toddlers respond to signing by copying and many communicate using these signs during other parts of the day.
- 2.52 Children learn to be independent and staff encourage them to tackle simple tasks themselves. For example, children took their own shoes off before going on a walk, and washed their hands before mealtimes.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendation for further improvement

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

- Provide additional opportunities for exploration and creativity for the children under two in the immediate outdoor area.

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 excellent.
- The pupils' communication skills are extremely well-developed from the EYFS onwards.
 - The pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent: they want to succeed in all they do.
 - The excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum of pupils of all needs and abilities underpins their considerable achievements.
 - The pupils enjoy great success in academic subjects and in art, design, drama, music and sport.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- The self-understanding, self-confidence and resilience of the pupils is excellent.
 - The moral awareness of the pupils, underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos, is extremely well-developed.
 - The social development of the pupils is excellent, with boarding playing a central role in this development.

Recommendations

- 3.3 In the context of excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider making the following improvements:
- Extend the school's commitment to programmes in the local and wider community, thereby further developing the social awareness of the pupils.
 - Strengthen further the school's *Mindset* programme to enhance the already positive attitudes towards learning possessed by the pupils.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils of all needs and abilities have highly developed communication skills which are exhibited from the EYFS onwards. Boarding plays an important role in promoting these skills. The pupils are typically articulate and extremely confident when speaking to others, whether this be in the supportive environment of their classrooms, in the wider arena of an assembly, or on the stage during performances. They do not fear speaking in public and do so exceptionally well. By the time they reach their final years in the school, they write essays and stories fluently, as noted for example in the work done by senior pupils in history on Thomas Becket and in English when imagining the life of a soldier in combat. Many pupils have an equal facility with French and Latin, as seen in the mastery of grammatical forms in both of these languages. Younger pupils too rise to the challenges of developing first their handwriting and then their writing skills.
- 3.6 Listening comes easily to the pupils: they want to learn, not just from their teachers but from each other; and in assemblies the stillness of their concentration as they listen to members of staff or other pupils is palpable. Very many pupils are avid readers and enjoy talking about the latest book they are enjoying. Those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) demonstrate within just a few months of joining the school a justified confidence with spoken and written English. For all pupils, their accomplished communication skills enable them to engage with their learning across the curriculum most effectively; and for some pupils, national success in this area has been achieved in handwriting and Bible reading competitions.

- 3.7 The pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good and often excellent progress in their learning. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence shows attainment to be above in relation to national age-related expectations. Children in the EYFS perform in line with or above expectations. Overall attainment in English and in mathematics, as measured by standardised tests, is better than average. Pupils sitting examinations for the next stage in their education perform sufficiently well to win places at their choice of school. Since the previous inspection in 2016 twenty pupils have won academic scholarships. Leaders' and governors' focus upon individual pupils and the dedication of the teaching staff have contributed greatly to this success. In their questionnaire responses most parents agreed that the teaching enabled their children to make good progress and that the individual educational needs of their children are met effectively.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate excellent skills including in practical and creative subject areas, as observed in activities and classes such as physical education, cookery, art, and design technology, with pupils showing in each area a firm grasp of the techniques required to produce the best quality work. Many pupils are accomplished gardeners, growing vegetables and flowers in the gardening club's dedicated space. Sporting skills are highly developed and are clearly on display in physical education classes and during games: many pupils have exceptional talents in their chosen sports whilst others simply join in with proficiency and great enthusiasm. Pupils have achieved much success at county level and beyond in a wide range of sports including horse riding, cricket, hockey, martial arts, and shooting, and school teams have performed at county level with great success in cross country, hockey and show jumping.
- 3.9 Pupils have great confidence in mathematics and numeracy, from children in the EYFS analysing accurately different possible combinations of colours to older pupils grappling successfully with quadratic equations. In 2018, three pupils won gold awards in the UK Junior Mathematics Challenge, with another three winning silver or bronze awards. The strength of mathematics in the school is demonstrated by the one hundred percent success rate of pupils in mathematics scholarship examinations since the previous inspection.
- 3.10 The pupils' performances in English and drama are also strong, with pupils winning regional debating, poetry and essay writing competitions and some 270 pupils during the last three years gaining merit or distinctions in their externally accredited speech and drama examinations, including the best mark in the country in these examinations. Music is also extremely successful, with 70 pupils during the last three years gaining awards in externally accredited vocal and instrumental examinations. Eighteen of these awards were distinctions. Three pupils have won places in the National Schools' Symphony Orchestra and one has won a place in the National Youth Choir. During the last three years eight pupils have gained music scholarships or exhibitions to senior schools. The school has won the overall Hereford Festival Cup in each of the last two years with over 80 individual awards made to the pupils.
- 3.11 The pupils use of information and communication technology (ICT) overall is effective with many examples of excellent work, seen when EYFS children used numeracy links with coding to program a computer, in the design of Easter cards by younger pupils, in the presentation of experimental work in science and in the use of sophisticated charts to add critical depth to geographical research projects carried out by older pupils. Pupils with SEND and EAL make especially effective use of ICT in their work with some using voice recognition software. Teachers from the EYFS onwards employ interactive whiteboards effectively to reinforce learning and to illustrate the ideas discussed with pupils. Some excellent examples of higher order study skills were seen, from dealing with the complexities of different types of averages in mathematics to providing an in-depth appreciation of the history of pantomime in drama.

- 3.12 The pupils have great pride in their school, demonstrated through their commitment to work and to activities as well as to the traditions and community of the school. This pride is strongly evident amongst those pupils who board, even if they do so for just one night each week. Extremely positive attitudes are demonstrated throughout the school, from the EYFS onwards and amongst the boarding pupils. Pupils work exceptionally well with each other, in pairs and in groups. Lesson observations showed that pupils clearly enjoy working collaboratively. The pupils are prepared to take command of their own learning and as noted in discussions and lessons observed they do so with enthusiasm. Most pupils in their questionnaire responses agreed that they are encouraged to think and learn for themselves.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils display high levels of resilience, self-discipline, independence and self-confidence and these characteristics are evident in their daily lives. The school's recent initiative of the *Mindset* programme, promoted by the leadership and governors, is successful in developing such qualities, as well as other more intellectual ones, and pupils from the EYFS onwards have responded with great enthusiasm to the programme. The boarding environment in the school is especially suited to developing these qualities. During discussions boarders expressed very positive views about the programme and the consequent development of their self-confidence. Pupils who spoke to inspectors about their individual accomplishments and interests were eloquent about the positive impact upon their lives of their personal success, but they also emphasised that they were often inspired by the success of those around them. They said that 'Do not give up' is a motto which very many pupils hold close to their hearts. They persevere in all they do even in the face of difficulty. Pupils with SEND and EAL demonstrate this quality particularly well in their written work.
- 3.15 The decision-making of pupils is typically effective. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme promotes a 'can-do' attitude and encourages pupils to reflect on the decisions they face, including those about their work-life balance. The democratically elected pupil council representatives discussed the contributions they make to the school with gusto, believing they make a real difference and citing recent improvements in the boarding houses as an example. A few pupils in their questionnaire responses disagreed that the feedback they receive helps them to improve. The work examined shows that the feedback pupils receive provides sufficient guidance to allow them to make decisions about how they might improve. Pupils have a great deal of individual responsibility which provides them with many opportunities for making wise decisions for themselves about their work and how to balance this with their busy lives.
- 3.16 The spiritual awareness of pupils is strong as demonstrated through their aesthetic and religious reflections. The school chapel is the spiritual centre of the school and pupils regardless of their beliefs respect their time in chapel with many seeing it as a time for quiet personal reflection. Pupils are involved in writing prayers, reading in Chapel and creating class and tutor group assemblies based on a chosen value. Visits to places of worship organised by the religious education department have included mosques and synagogues and these have given the pupils a deeper appreciation of the wider meaning of faith, as demonstrated in their accounts of these visits. There are close connections with local churches and with Hereford Cathedral. Pupils also reflect most effectively on the non-material world through art and music. Many pupils spoke with genuine passion about the beautiful countryside around the school and a strong bond with nature was celebrated when the school sang John Rutter's hymn 'For the beauty of the Earth' with intense feeling.

- 3.17 Behaviour throughout the school was observed to be exemplary and demonstrated most effectively the leadership's commitment to kindness in the life of the school. All pupils in their questionnaire responses agreed that the school expects them to behave well and the vast majority of parents said that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Pupils enjoy working and playing with each other. Older pupils support and encourage younger pupils in activities and clubs. As pupils move through the school, staff expectations of them increase. Older pupils are given many leadership opportunities and undertake various responsibilities, including the roles of librarian, prefects, and school council representatives. Such responsibilities enhance the already strong sense of moral responsibility possessed by the pupils as they deal with each other with kindness in their daily lives. The pupils have a clear awareness of the difference between right and wrong and this is firmly underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos.
- 3.18 The social development of the pupils is excellent. The boarding environment plays an extremely effective and positive role in bringing pupils together. Pupils say they relish the opportunities given to them to work together, for example in after school and Saturday activities, sports teams, musical groups, drama productions, and house competitions. The polished performances of pupils in a school production of *Treasure Island* demonstrated the power of collaboration between pupils especially well. Pupils work with each other naturally and freely: this was observed from the EYFS onwards. In their questionnaire responses the parents maintained that the school helps their children to develop strong teamwork and social skills. The initiative of the girls in their final year coming together to form a choir to celebrate the end of their time in the school is just one example of pupils collaborating independently on projects most effectively. In discussion, pupils remarked on the positive impact on them of an annual 'Better Together' day in September which brings children of differing ages together to take on a range of challenges.
- 3.19 Pupils have developed an excellent understanding of the wider world and a healthy respect for the beliefs and backgrounds of others. Almost all pupils in their questionnaire responses agreed that the school encourages them to respect and tolerate others. The presence in the school of a small number of boarders from overseas helps this process considerably. These pupils said during discussions how they were made to feel very welcome by staff and pupils alike and so were able to settle in quickly. The pupils speak positively about the school's link with another school in Pakistan and about the impact of this link upon their understanding of other cultures. The pupils select a charity to support each year and the school council organises various events to raise money for this charity. Older pupils pay regular visits to and provide support for disabled children in a nearby hospice. Pupils join with children from local schools during the optional Saturday morning activities programme, which is open to those beyond the school gates. Leaders are considering ways in which the school's outreach and community programmes may be extended to further develop pupils' social awareness.
- 3.20 The pupils have a well-developed sense of how to keep safe and be healthy. They are aware of the dangers they face when online and know how to avoid them. They understand what a healthy diet is and how to maintain a good work-life balance. Many learn through cookery activities how to prepare a healthy meal. The pupils demonstrate high levels of fitness, developed through their participation in physical education and games. Most parents agreed in their questionnaire responses that the school encourages their children to adopt healthy lifestyles, and most pupils said that they knew how to stay safe when online.

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 a representative of the governing body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting inspector
Mrs Rebecca Lyons-Smith	Compliance team inspector (Headmistress of prep, GSA school)
Mrs Elizabeth Harris	Team inspector (Former director of music, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Follett	Team inspector for boarding (Head of section, HMC school)
Miss Victoria Plenderleith	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Team inspector for EYFS (Former senior teacher, IAPS school)