



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Polwhele House School

October 2018



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School's Details

School	Polwhele House School			
DfE number	908/6076			
Address	Polwhele House School Newquay Road Truro Cornwall TR4 9AE			
Telephone number	01872 273011			
Email address	office@polwhelehouse.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Chris Curl			
Proprietors	Canon Richard White and Mrs Rosemary White			
Age range	3 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	93			
	Boys	49	Girls	44
	Day pupils	76	Boarders	17
	EYFS	13	Juniors	71
	Seniors	9		
Inspection dates	30 October to 1 November 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Polwhele House School is a proprietorial, co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged from three to thirteen years. It was founded in 1976 as Boscawen Rose School, and moved to its current site in 1981. The school is overseen by a managing council, comprising the proprietors and five councillors with a range of professional backgrounds.
- 1.2 The school comprises two departments: Pre-Prep, for pupils aged from three to seven years, and Prep, for pupils aged seven to thirteen years. Boarding is offered to pupils from Year 3 onwards, for up to four nights a week.
- 1.3 The current headmaster had been in post for two months at the time of the inspection.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to create a friendly, stimulating, caring environment in which every child feels valued, able to reach their full academic potential and to find their special talent. It seeks to equip children with strong moral values within a Christian framework and to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from the local area with a range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is broadly average. The school has identified eight pupils as having special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support. Three pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for two pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 20 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 21 other pupils because of their special talents in riding and performing arts.

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

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 relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

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 encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff.
- 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 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and 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 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not always pay regard to current statutory guidance. The school has not always ensured that, where applicable, checks of the barred list or for prohibition from teaching or management have been undertaken before staff and proprietors commence work at the school, including supply staff. Measures have not been taken to ensure the safety of boarders, particularly at night. Health and safety and fire safety requirements are not met and an effective approach to risk assessment is not in place. The standards on safety of boarders (NMS 6.1 and 6.3), fire precautions (NMS 7.1) and child protection (NMS 11) are not met and represent a failure to safeguard boarders
- 2.10 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9, 10, and 13-15, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 2-4, 8-10, 12, 15, and 16 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 (a) and (b) [safeguarding]; 8 (a) and (b) [safeguarding of boarders]; 11 [health and safety]; 12 [fire safety]; 16 (a) and (b) [risk assessment]; NMS 6.1 and 6.3 [safety of boarders]; NMS 7.1 [fire precautions] and NMS 11 [child protection] are not met.**

Action point 1

- the school must ensure that, where applicable, checks of the barred list and for prohibition from teaching or management are undertaken prior to staff and proprietors starting work at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8 (a) and (b) and, for the same reason, NMS 11].

Action point 2

- the school must ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the effective implementation of a written health and safety policy [paragraph 11 and, for the same reason, NMS 6.1].

Action point 3

- the school must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, in particular by ensuring that a fire risk prevention policy and a formally recorded and regularly reviewed fire risk assessment are in place [paragraph 12 and, for the same reason, NMS 7.1].

Action point 4

- the school must ensure that the welfare of the pupils is safeguarded and promoted by the effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy, including by training staff in risk assessment and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks [paragraph 16 (a) and (b) and, for the same reason, NMS 6.3].

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

- 2.11 Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.12 The school does not make all required appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and supply staff and proprietors. The right to work in the United Kingdom is not checked before staff and proprietors commence take up their role. Written notification of appropriate safer recruitment checks has not been obtained from supply agencies before their staff commence work at the school. The single central register of staff appointments is not kept as required. In particular, the register does not record checks of the barred list, prohibition from teaching and from management checks, checks of the right to work in the United Kingdom, and checks made on supply agency staff.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(f) and 18(3) [appointment of staff], 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c) [appointment of supply staff], 20(6)(b)(ii) [suitability of proprietors] and 21(1), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c) and 21(6) [the single central register of appointments] and NMS 14.1 [staff recruitment] are not met.

Action point 5

- the school must ensure that the right to work in the United Kingdom is checked before staff and proprietors commence work at the school [paragraph 18(c)(iii), 18(2)(f) and 18(3), 20(6)(b)(ii) and, for the same reason, NMS 14.1].

Action point 6

- the school must ensure written notification of the required safer recruitment checks has been obtained from supply agencies before their staff commence work at the school [paragraph 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c) and, for the same reason, NMS 14.1].

Action point 7

- **the school must ensure that the single central register of staff appointments is kept as required. In particular, it must ensure that the register records checks of the barred list, prohibition from teaching and from management checks, checks of the right to work in the United Kingdom, and checks made on supply agency staff [paragraph 21(1), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c) and 21(6) and, for the same reason, NMS 14.1].**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their 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.
- 2.15 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 and 6.2 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietors, 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. 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.
- 2.17 **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

- 2.18 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.
- 2.19 **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

- 2.20 Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.21 The proprietors does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.22 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 13.1, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5 and 13.8 are not met.**

Action point 2

- **the proprietors must ensure that leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c) and, for the same reason, NMS 13.1, 13.3, 13,4, 13.5 and 13.8].**

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' attitudes to learning are highly developed.
- Pupils demonstrate a high level of numeracy skills and effectively employ these in problem solving.
- Pupils display excellent communication skills which they ably apply to all aspects of school life.
- Pupils show sound skills in information and communication technology (ICT), but their ability to apply these skills in other subjects across the curriculum is not fully developed.
- Most pupils demonstrate good study skills overall, but apply their analytical and reasoning skills inconsistently across the curriculum.

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

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence and self-awareness.
- Pupils show excellent social awareness and work effectively with others as a result of their appreciation and sharing of the school's positive values.
- Pupils show notably strong appreciation of the non-material world.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent moral understanding.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Extend pupils' ability by providing opportunities to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Strengthen opportunities for pupils to develop their analytical and reasoning skills across the curriculum.
- Enhance pupils' excellent independence, initiative and decision-making skills further by increasing opportunities to experience and explore the outdoor spaces available.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children make a strong start to their education. They progress rapidly from their different starting points and reach at least the expected levels of development for their age. Throughout the following years, most pupils continue to make a good rate of progress, enabling them to achieve good standards in a range of subjects across the broad curriculum. Leavers regularly achieve places and scholarships in selective senior schools. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests but evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be broadly average in relation to national age-related expectations. All groups of pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, make good progress in relation to their different starting points. This is due to the effective interpretation and use of assessment results by leaders and teachers who identify pupils' individual needs and ensure effective support for them. The recently established assessment tracking system provides an effective transition between each academic year. This demonstrates that leaders and proprietors have successfully met the previous inspection recommendation, to develop the analysis of the high-quality assessment data available to ensure maximum progress for every pupil. The good rate of progress of pupils with SEND in core literacy skills is especially enhanced by the close liaison between all teachers, senior leadership, and learning support provision based on needs identified through effective analysis of assessment data. Boarders appreciate the scheduled time for completing homework and feel that this helps to enhance their academic performance because of the support available. The vast majority of parents and most pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school enables pupils to learn and make good progress.
- 3.6 Pupils reach good standards in a broad range of subjects and activities as they respond to the ongoing help and support given by their teachers and the monitoring of their progress. Their understanding of how to improve their learning as they progress through the school is enhanced by the recently introduced marking scheme, which gives clear indication of things they have done well and of how to improve in other areas. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few pupils felt that marking and feedback did not help them to improve, but the inspectors do not concur with this view. The school has responded well to the recommendation of the previous inspection to communicate clearer targets for the future on the end of year reports. Pupils benefit greatly when their teacher's planning and lesson delivery caters for their different abilities and appropriate challenge is provided, including the opportunity to think creatively and critically. For example, in one English lesson, prep pupils enthusiastically explored and considered exciting alternative vocabulary choices to improve texts of different levels of difficulty describing animals. In another English lesson, more able pupils were not given opportunities to extend their learning further with more challenging texts and therefore the rate of their progress was hindered.
- 3.7 Strong skills in core subjects are established in the pre-prep and, as pupils progress through the school, most continue to display well-developed skills and knowledge. In subjects such as geography and history, where pupils' recorded work includes a good standard of informative writing, and in music, where their good awareness of pitch and rhythm is evident. In questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of pupils said that their teachers are supportive and helpful when addressing any problems with their work. Pupils commented on how the school helps and cares about all children, not just some. The wide range of skills and techniques learned in art lessons were seen to be employed by pupils across the curriculum, as in the highly creative presentation of project work by older pupils on how humans have affected the environment. Older prep pupils were observed using strong mathematical and artistic skills to produce an accurate scale drawing of a human skeleton.

- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills are highly developed and enhance their achievements. Pupils are very articulate, as demonstrated when they applied their speaking skills when performing to an audience. Pupils in the upper part of the school demonstrated their expressive recitation of poetry in an assembly and during an English lesson exploring the style of Charles Causley's work. The youngest pupils demonstrated mature communication skills in presenting a puppet show to an audience, asking for participation. Pupils are also adept at listening. Their confident speaking and listening skills are encouraged and nurtured in class discussions, for example, in a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lesson in which all pupils contributed to a lively discussion about how children live in different countries, where everyone's view was accepted. Pupils become confident and effective writers as they progress through the school building on the strong foundation of literacy skills established in the earlier years. They adapt their creative, persuasive and factual writing to suit the needs of different purposes and audiences as seen in the variety of book reviews displayed in the library. Pupils' enjoyment of reading is underpinned by thorough teaching of basic skills in the Early Years and by ensuring an adequate supply of appropriate books in the library.
- 3.9 Pupils' achievement in mathematics is excellent and contributes to their overall positive outcomes. Throughout the school, pupils show competent mathematical skills and demonstrate a high level of numeracy skills which they effectively employ in problem solving tasks. The youngest pupils demonstrate growing confidence in their number work in a variety of contexts. Children in the EYFS were happy to explain how they were exploring the concept of adding one more to a given number by tapping pegs into a pumpkin. Older pupils apply their secure knowledge of place value and the four rules of number to systematically solve word problems of suitable levels of challenge to match the range of ability. They apply their learning to different subjects, for example in using mathematical skills to complete calculations or solve word problems in science.
- 3.10 Pupils display sound skills in ICT, when they have adequate access to technological resources. Younger pupils show understanding of basic programming skills and older pupils are able to demonstrate word and data processing skills and use presentation software in their fortnightly ICT lessons. Pupils were seen to apply and thus develop these skills on occasions in English, maths and science but not consistently in lessons across the curriculum.
- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate levels of study skills appropriate to their age. They apply themselves fully to their work in lessons, as was seen in a French lesson where the challenge of mastering pronunciation of numbers showed perseverance. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy challenge when it is presented. For example, EYFS children used imagination and reasoning in their learning choices, while older pupils were observed analysing texts to produce persuasive leaflets. Pupils at the top of the school showed the ability to synthesise when using reverse operations to check solutions to algebraic problems. In their recorded work older pupils show a positive approach to challenging tasks, but these are not evident across the curriculum, which hinders the development of high-level thinking and reasoning skills, especially for the more able pupils.
- 3.12 Pupils flourish in and beyond the classroom, achieving well both academically and non-academically. Many pupils are offered at least one academic, music, drama or sports award or scholarship on leaving the school. A number of pupils, including the performing arts and riding scholars, enjoy success in music, drama, equestrian, swimming and cross-country events. Successes in local music festivals and schools' arts competitions are frequent. This is because leaders and proprietors ensure that the school provides a broad curriculum and range of extra-curricular activities, as well as the school's equestrian centre. Pupils take part in many musical and dramatic performances during their time at the school. The vast majority of parents agree that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities.

- 3.13 All pupils, including boarders and children in the EYFS, exhibit extremely positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about working together in groups as well as independently and maintain mature levels of concentration in lessons. They co-operate well and were keen to engage in and contribute actively in all lessons observed. Pupils are able to evaluate how well they are doing and appreciate visual measures to track and check their progress, for example the attainment ladders in maths.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils' self-knowledge and self-esteem are notably strong. Pupils of all ages demonstrate high levels of self-confidence, perseverance and resilience. From the EYFS, pupils are happy to learn from their mistakes and willingly correct errors in their work. As they reach the top of the school pupils are able to identify misconceptions in order to understand what can go wrong in their own work, as observed in a prep games lesson where pupils were predicting the outcomes of different strategies in dodgeball. Pupils are confident, friendly and willing to express their thoughts within the family atmosphere of the school. Those who spoke to the inspectors said that they feel supported by the warm rapport that exists between them and their teachers. Pupils show respect for each other and understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Pupils with SEND or EAL consider their progress and success using the school's 'passport' system which helps them to plan their next steps with their teachers. Most parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent.
- 3.16 Boarders settle in quickly to the family atmosphere of the boarding house with support from the house mother. They quickly gain self-reliance and exercise increasing levels of independence as they undertake routines such as making their bed themselves. All parents of boarders who responded to the questionnaire agreed that boarding has supported their child's personal development. Staff believe that on leaving the school pupils go on to the next stage of their education confident in their abilities and talents and as well-rounded individuals, reflecting the school's aims and Christian ethos.
- 3.17 From the earliest years, pupils know that the decisions they make can be determinants of their own well-being. They organise themselves well and learn to make good decisions about their needs. Children in the EYFS make sensible decisions about what to wear outside on a cold, breezy day and confidently choose their classroom activities, supported by encouragement from their teachers and well-prepared, wide ranging resources which capture their interests. In outdoor activities, pupils made independent decisions about where and how fast to walk through muddy terrain. Other opportunities to enhance pupils' excellent independence, initiative and decision-making skills further by increasing opportunities to experience and explore the outdoor spaces available are more limited. From Year 3, pupils can choose to board for up to four nights a week and boarders spoke enthusiastically about choosing their evening boarding activities. Pupils democratically elect members of the school council to represent their class and decide which of their peers' ideas to pursue by voting. In discussions, the more senior pupils showed understanding of the importance of choosing the right senior school.
- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate well-developed spiritual understanding through their appreciative descriptions of the world around them. They understand and appreciate the school's encouragement to enjoy life, including in ways that are non-material. Pupils of all ages appreciate the school grounds and the opportunities these offer for quiet, reflective times and adventure. They spoke with enthusiasm about the beauty of their surroundings and relish opportunities to be out of doors. Pupils happily sing hymns and join in prayers in assemblies strengthening their commitment to Christian and other positive values and actively contribute to discussions, articulating their ideas about spirituality and respect for everyone and everything. For example, in one assembly observed by the inspectors, pupils showed their understanding of Buddhism as they held pebbles to represent different aspects of life that could improve. Their reflective comments showed a mature appreciation of spiritual considerations and

non-material aspects of life. This is encouraged by the school ethos promoting respect for different religions, and through teachers enabling pupils to consider and explore ideas about different cultures.

- 3.19 Excellent displays of pupils' art, often inspired by the styles of well-known artists, and a variety of written work around the school show pupils' developing sense of creativity and beauty. In a science lesson, younger prep pupils walked through the woods holding mirrors and expressed their appreciation of the tree tops and autumn coloured leaves above them. Pupils develop an appreciation of music and high levels of musicianship from an early age, through leaders' and proprietors' commitment to a high-quality music education. Visitors are serenaded by pupils enjoying their music practice upon entering the school in the mornings.
- 3.20 Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, as seen in a class discussion about the actions of British monarchs, including Henry VIII. They are strongly committed to the school rules and values, which are first taught in the EYFS. Pupils are very polite and respectful to one another, to staff and to visitors. Their behaviour throughout the school is excellent and good manners are evident in lunch and around the school. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors say that the school's use of rewards and sanctions, based on consequences, helps them take responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others. Pupils say they learn from mistakes, responding to the constant reinforcement of the positive school values by school leaders and staff. Pupils appreciate that incidents have consequences and readily respond to the positive, supportive guidance of staff, taking opportunities to reflect on any poor choices of behaviour seriously. Their understanding and respect of rules and laws contribute positively to the excellent behaviour seen by inspectors and to the happy and warm ambience of the school. Pupils understand that rules are important at a national level and speak knowledgeably about the importance of fundamental British values in PSHE lessons and in assembly. Their understanding and respect of rules and laws contribute positively to the excellent behaviour seen by inspectors and to the happy and warm ambience of the school. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school expects them to behave well, and most parents who responded agreed that the school promoted good behaviour.
- 3.21 From the EYFS, pupils show a high level of awareness of the importance of good social skills. They learn to take turns and share toys from an early age, enjoying their teachers' individual praise for co-operative behaviour. Pupils are proud of their school community and there is a strong ethos of collaborative teamwork in lessons, sports teams and in rehearsing for concerts and school productions. Boarders show a sense of community and the arrangements for existing boarders to look after new ones show their willingness to make friends and help them to settle quickly. All pupils were seen to demonstrate concern for those who feel upset and open and positive relationships with each other in the playground, around school and with their teachers.
- 3.22 Older pupils demonstrate excellent qualities of leadership, conscientiously undertaking positions of responsibility, including as sports captains and school council members. They act as responsible reading buddies to younger children and throughout the school each class gives roles of responsibility in the form of monitors. Pupils also exercise responsibility through lunchtime routines, including helping to clear tables. They contribute positively to the local community and to wider society through supporting local charities, taking part in community events and singing to local elderly residents at Christmas. Pupils willingly contribute harvest donations to the local food bank and are actively involved in recycling projects.
- 3.23 Pupils show a positive approach to diversity, whether of ability or cultural background, and their cultural understanding and appreciation of those from different backgrounds to themselves is well-developed as seen in prep pupils' understanding of the Aztecs as they developed an Aztec menu. This is also evident in their warm relationships and friendships in lessons and around the school, as well as in their empathetic attitudes expressed in class discussions. Leaders and proprietors' successful implementation of the whole-school ethos contributes to pupils' sound understanding of Christian and other positive values, and to their appreciation of others. Cultural and religious festivals of other countries are celebrated in assemblies. Pupils strongly respect each other and understand that people

have more in common than separates them. For example, in an assembly many contributed their view that everyone deserves respect whatever their beliefs or background. They show a high level of understanding and tolerance of others, developed through PSHE and visits from people within the local community. All parents and almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.

- 3.24 In discussions, pupils throughout the school expressed their strong awareness of how to stay safe and keep healthy, both in their everyday lives and when online. Day pupils and boarders feel safe and secure at school. In their discussions and classroom displays about well-being pupils show an excellent understanding of how to keep physically healthy and understand the importance of keeping active as part of a healthy lifestyle. Young pupils clearly articulated their understanding of healthy food and how too much sugar is not good for people. They believe that enjoying hobbies and interests helps to stay happy in life. Pupils benefit physically from the opportunities to take regular exercise in team and individual sports, riding and dance lessons.

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 the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended class registration times 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

Mrs Penelope Austin	Reporting inspector
Mrs Helen Chalmers	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Miss Sue Duff	Compliance team inspector (Former senior housemistress, HMC school)
Mrs Sally Cunliffe	Team inspector for boarding (Former senior housemistress, HMC school)