



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Slindon College

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Slindon College			
DfE number	938/6094			
Registered charity number	1028125			
Address	Slindon College Top Road Arundel West Sussex BN18 0RH			
Telephone number	01243 814320			
Email address	registrar@slindoncollege.co.uk			
Acting head	Mrs Sotiria Vlahodimou			
Chair of governors	Mr David Slee			
Age range	8 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	93			
	Day pupils	79	Boarders	14
	Juniors	4		
	Seniors	70	Sixth Form	15
Inspection dates	8 to 10 November 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Slindon College is an independent day and boarding school providing specialist learning support for male pupils aged 8 to 18. The school is governed by a board of trustees. The school comprises three sections; junior school for pupils aged 8 to 11, senior school for pupils aged 11 to 16, and sixth form for pupils aged 16 to 18. Boarders are housed on the upper floors of the main building.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the head has left the school and at the time of the inspection an acting head was in place.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to give all pupils access to an education that is tailored to their needs and to treat each of them as individuals. The core values include empathy, perseverance and self-worth.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, and all have already been identified as having individual educational needs and or disabilities, which include speech and language difficulties, social anxiety, dyslexia, autistic spectrum conditions, dyspraxia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Local authorities fund the 62 pupils who have an education health and care plan. English is an additional language for four pupils, whose needs are supported by classroom teachers. Pupils with identified talents are given opportunities to develop, for example in art or drama.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Additionally, this visit serves as a material change visit in anticipation of the school's application to increase the current numbers of pupils.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 Pupils take GCSE/A-level and other examinations at the school. The small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, but inspection evidence confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 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. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

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

- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4, 7 and 23 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and 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 14 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.20 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.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are met.**

3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

Summary of findings

- 3.1 The school will be applying to increase its roll to 110. The curriculum, teaching and accommodation can cater for the proposed change. The school meets all the independent school standards and national minimum standards and is likely to continue to do so if numbers are increased.

Recommendation

- 3.2 It is recommended that any application for material change be approved.

4. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- From their low starting points, almost all pupils make strong progress, so that they gain the skills needed to move into mainstream education when they leave.
- Pupils develop excellent communication skills during their time at school and are particularly good listeners.
- Pupils show good creative skills in art, drama and other areas, but there are less well developed in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils are increasingly able to take initiative as they move through the school, but opportunities to do so are sometimes curtailed by the premature intervention of staff.

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

- Pupils rapidly develop in their self-confidence, self-awareness and self-worth as they move through the school.
- Pupils have a clear idea of right and wrong and a considerable but unconscious spiritual awareness.
- Pupils have a strong social awareness, collaborate easily, respect differences, and show excellent empathy and patience in their relationships with each other.

Recommendations

4.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to develop greater leadership in their own learning by ensuring intervention during lessons is only when necessary.
- Enable pupils to develop their creative potential in ICT.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

4.5 Almost all pupils make strong progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding from low starting points on entry. The particular barriers faced by individual pupils invalidates generalisation, but the majority reach good levels in practically based areas of the curriculum, whilst remaining at lower levels in others. The ethos of the school underlines that everyone's learning path is different, and the aim is

to encourage pupils to reach their potential by providing a supportive, nurturing, calm and impactful environment. In this respect the school successfully fulfils its aims. Nearly all pupils responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and the vast majority said that their teachers knew how to help them learn. Teaching staff have a thorough, informed and detailed knowledge of each pupil's needs, and this is a significant factor in maintaining their progress. Most pupils said that their skills and knowledge improved in most lessons, and this is corroborated by inspection evidence.

- 4.6 In Year 10 and above pupils study a curriculum at a level appropriate to their abilities and needs. In an overwhelmingly positive response from parents to the questionnaire, all said that both the range of subjects was suitable for their child and their child's particular individual educational needs are met effectively. The wide range of courses nullifies the use of data to draw any conclusion about progress. However, information provided by the school shows that most pupils achieve examination results roughly in line with that expected for their ability, with some achieving significantly higher. In each year pupils consistently achieve level one, level two or other GCSE equivalents that enable them to smoothly progress to the next stages of their education. By the end of Year 11 well over two-thirds of pupils have developed the skills and attitudes ready for mainstream education. At this stage, leavers move to colleges to study range of courses, mainly vocational, but each linked to an interest developed at the school. Nearly all senior pupils said that they felt well informed about their careers. Pupils who remain for the sixth form successfully consolidate their previous studies, although some will study one or two A levels, and occasionally progress to university courses. One recent leaver is studying architecture.
- 4.7 Pupils unflinchingly try to do their best in lessons and in doing so demonstrate good overall recall of earlier information and the ability to apply it to new situations. Pupils enjoy improving their creative and physical skills, for example in art, drama and creative writing, physical education (PE), and as a result produce exciting and imaginative work. Although the size of the school prevents regular fixtures, school soccer teams have won local competitions. Teaching skilfully draws on pupils' stronger practical and creative skills in subjects such as mathematics, for example, introducing numerical challenges in measurement of perimeters in the playground or ingredients in cooking. For the majority of pupils numeracy skills remain low, in line with their abilities, as they move through the school, although some have the confidence to study GCSE mathematics, algebra and accountancy in the sixth form. Scrutiny of written work shows good progress in pupils' skills in manipulating number. For example, many can successfully add monetary amounts in Year 7, and by Year 10 calculate change. Some pupils remain at a functional level in mathematics, whilst a few develop the skills and confidence to use Venn diagrams and frequency trees. In all subjects, teachers and teaching assistants are very supportive, as reflected in pupils' comments in the questionnaires and discussions. On occasions, however, they intervene prematurely, hence limiting pupils' opportunities to discover their own strategies, and counter to the school's core aim of developing perseverance.
- 4.8 The communication skills of most pupils develop remarkably during their time at the school, and in discussions almost all pupils identify their confidence in speaking as their most successful achievement. One pupil described the school as allowing him to 'find his voice'. Pupils are excellent listeners, invariably allowing time for those who find verbal communication a continuing difficulty. Some pupils have developed high level verbal skills as observed in an expressive Year 10 drama lesson where pupils performed a piece about two young boys meeting for the first time. In discussion, many pupils cited the annual drama production as highlight of their school year. Pupils read keenly and enjoy their DEAR (drop everything and read) sessions. Barriers to their writing means that written skills do not match those in other areas, although published poems in school anthologies show a good command of structure.
- 4.9 The school's emphasis on, and investment in, digital learning has enabled many pupils to secure their good progress, but has yet to untap their creative skills, particularly in the areas of coding or programming. Pupils show at least good, and sometime excellent competency in manipulating

software, and naturally use ICT to reinforce their learning or deepening their knowledge at all ages and across the curriculum.

- 4.10 Pupils have sound study skills for their age. Pupils were able to define and explain a fair test as expected for age. They know terminology such as control or independent variable. Some can draw on examples from science, but most were unable to apply these to new situations. Some pupils showed a good understanding of the concepts of hypothesis and analysis, although they could not identify when they might have used those approaches in lessons.
- 4.11 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and, in some cases, excellent. Classroom behaviour is impeccable. Pupils work productively and in groups, for example achieving considerable success in the international Green Power events. They are highly supportive of each other in lessons and when working collaboratively, especially in practical subjects. Most pupils said that teachers' marking helped them improve their work, but scrutiny of written work shows little evidence of the assessment by peers that would develop their critical ability. Pupils have the ability to take initiative, and although examples of this were observed in drama, cookery and woodland activities, they were rare in other areas, stalling pupils' journey of discovery as articulated in the school's core values.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 4.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.13 Pupils' development of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge is excellent. Almost all pupils join the school as a result of unsatisfactory experiences in their previous education. In the questionnaires the very large majority said they were happy at school, and that they felt safe. Inspectors held discussions with nearly every pupil in the school. They frequently started their responses by saying 'before I came here I couldn't ...'. Almost all spoke of their previous difficulties in communication and associated lack of self-belief or confidence. In contrast to their starting points, discussions were characterised by pupils who were unafraid to express views or to disagree with others. Pupils readily share their own experiences or perceptions and many show a quiet, self-deprecating humour. By the time they reach Year 11 almost all pupils have regained the personal self-belief and confidence they need to move to mainstream colleges. The vast majority of parents replying to the questionnaire said that the school had helped their child become confident and independent. Almost all pupils have one or more barriers to learning and/or communication. They are highly self-aware, cognisant of the challenges faced by themselves and by others. In line with the school values, they show strong empathy and exceptional patience. In the questionnaires most pupils and all parents said that the school expects pupils to behave well, and they live up to that expectation. In discussions pupils said that they were always impressed by how teachers dealt with "us", particularly if we are "on the edge". A comment that reflects their mature sensitivity and perspective.
- 4.14 Pupils' personal development is buttressed by staff who are highly and specifically trained. In the questionnaires the overwhelming majority of parents said that the school was well governed and led. The investment in training alongside ICT are good examples of the way that the leadership actively promotes the well-being of the pupils. Without exception, every parent of a boarder who responded to the questionnaire agreed that boarding supported their child's personal development, and that boarding staff were responsive to their child's needs and circumstances. Boarders said that they felt valued and well cared for. In boarding time pupils display a clear understanding of the need to respect their peers, and others' personal space. As they develop confidence pupils become more resilient, able to adapt to new situations, exemplified in the attendance of some boarders at external drama clubs.
- 4.15 The extent to which pupils understand that decisions they make now can have an effect on their later life is good and, in some cases, excellent. Pupils told inspectors that gaining more autonomy in their own learning allows this to happen as they move up the school, whilst valuing the support of staff. In the questionnaires and in discussions, almost all pupils said that they have adults in school to whom

they can speak. They described an atmosphere and ethos in school that enables them to develop friendships and relationships which transcend their different needs.

- 4.16 The development of pupils' spiritual understanding is excellent, although they would not define it in those terms. They appreciate the beauty of their surroundings and articulate this effectively. Pupils described looking towards the Isle of Wight and ships on the sea, floating as though they were hanging in the sky. They described their pride in being educated in a house that had once served as World War One hospital, a manor house, and that had concealed Roman Catholics during the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth. Pupils said, 'we all come from small villages or concrete jungles, and we love the old building, the surroundings, and the sheep'.
- 4.17 The extent to which pupils can distinguish right from wrong is good and in some cases excellent. They have a clear-cut view of moral issues, understanding not only what the school rules are but explaining why they are in place. They are loyal and compliant, even if they disagree personally with some of the guidelines. They appreciate that safety, in its broadest definition, is paramount for an institution in which they can all be happy. They have an excellent understanding of how their own behaviour can impact on others and why other pupils act in the way they do, for example explaining that outbursts can be caused by not taking medication. Pupils have an excellent social awareness. They contribute in myriad ways to the life of the school both formally and informally. Pupils, including boarders, belong to a day house, and each identifies local and national charities for which to raise money. Many pupils spoke enthusiastically about the boarders "litter-pick" in the surrounding villages.
- 4.18 Pupils value highly the diversity within the school community. They realise that there are physical and mental differences between many of them but often prefer to accept these and focus more on the similarities. As pupils described it 'we are all the same because we are all different'. Parents and pupils in questionnaires responding overwhelmingly that the school is a place where respect and tolerance of others, whatever their national background, faith or needs is promoted. In discussions pupils spoke in an informed way about respect for those of other genders, and the value of conversations they have in lessons about gender identity.
- 4.19 Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is excellent. All boarders said they have enough to eat and appreciate the variety of the menus. Pupils enjoy regular exercise through formal sport and outside play, and appreciate that the after school clubs allow them to focus without expectation on hobbies rather than academic work.

5. Inspection Evidence

- 5.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with all pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings. Inspectors visited boarding accommodation and the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Cole	Reporting inspector
Mrs Sarah Teasdale	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, GSA school)
Mrs Helen Chalmers	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Keith Metcalfe	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr William Norton	Team inspector (Director of sport, HMC school)