



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

UPPINGHAM SCHOOL

APRIL 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Uppingham School			
DfE number	857/6002			
Registered charity number	1147280			
Address	Uppingham School Uppingham Oakham Rutland LE15 9QE			
Telephone number	01572 822216			
Email address	headmaster@uppingham.co.uk			
Headmaster	Dr Richard Maloney			
Chairman of Trustees	The Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell			
Age range	13 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	801			
	Boys	472	Girls	329
	Day pupils	9	Boarders	792
	Lower School	447	Sixth Form	354
Inspection dates	26 to 27 April 2017			

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.

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 following their inspection 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.

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.

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 an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting 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.

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 the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. 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'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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 chairman of trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses, together with the learning support and library. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr George Fisher	Reporting inspector
Mrs Barbara Elliott	Team inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Jeremy Hallows	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Graeme May	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Hilary Moriarty	Team inspector (Former head, GSA school)
Mr James Sheridan	Team inspector (Former principal, GSA school)
Mr Julian Thould	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Uppingham School is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 13 and 18 years. The school is a charitable trust and the members of the governing body act as the trustees. Since the previous inspection, a new sports centre and science building have been constructed. Additionally, a new headmaster has been appointed and the school's leadership team has been restructured.
- 1.2 The school was established in 1584 as a school for boys. Girls were first admitted in 1975 and the school is now fully co-educational. It has fifteen boarding houses, nine for boys and six for girls. Day pupils are members of boarding houses. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 are known as the Lower School and those in Years 12 and 13 belong to the Sixth Form.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to achieve academic excellence and to encourage pupils to think critically and independently. The full-boarding environment is intended to provide pupils with an inspiring and all-round education in which each pupil feels valued and nurtured, and through which pupils appreciate the value of service and leadership.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from families with a wide range of professional backgrounds; the majority are of White British heritage. Most day pupils live within a short distance of the school. Boarders come from homes in forty-seven counties across the UK and from thirty-one countries overseas. The school has identified 183 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), predominantly relating to dyslexia or dyspraxia, 131 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 128 pupils, of whom 10 receive additional specialist help, and for whom the curriculum may be modified. The remainder are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 72 pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and their needs are met through an academic extension programme. Standardised data used by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average upon entry.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Fourth Form	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils' academic outcomes are strong, as is their extra-curricular achievement across a wide range of sporting and other activities.
- Pupils develop high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary; they are thoughtful, hard-working and inquisitive.
- Pupils' study skills are excellent and they are ambitious to succeed.
- Progress slows within a few lessons where teaching does not challenge or stimulate pupils sufficiently.

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

- Uppingham School is a school community where boarding fosters exceptional all-round personal development.
- The exemplary behaviour of the pupils and their deeply-rooted mutual respect create a welcoming, supportive and inclusive community.
- Pupils are outward-looking, confident and self-assured, with a mature grasp of their responsibilities within the wider world.
- Pupils are notably proud of their school.

Recommendation

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Embed the stimulating and creative teaching which consistently challenges all pupils, in line with the school's aims.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve strongly in both academic and extra-curricular areas and so ensure the successful fulfilment of the school's aim to use the boarding environment as a springboard for providing pupils with an inspiring and holistic education. Pupils generally aspire to high standards and set themselves realistic yet demanding targets by which to measure their success. Nationally standardised data for the years 2013 to 2015 show that pupils' attainment at GCSE has been above the national average. Attainment at IGCSE has been above worldwide norms. This reflects the generally high standard of teaching, the strong subject knowledge of the enthusiastic staff and a secure understanding of examination requirements. Results at A level have also been above the national average, and were well above average in 2013 and 2014. The more able pupils in the sixth form benefit from teaching which encourages an independent approach to study and in some cases leads to exceptional levels of achievement.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve excellent outcomes through their academic enrichment and the extensive extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school. Significant numbers of successes have been recorded in mathematical and scientific Olympiads, and in higher-level language qualifications. Other pupils have been awarded Arkwright scholarships for design technology. Pupils' achievements in music, drama and art are particularly noteworthy. For example, pupils have gained distinction as members of the National Youth Orchestra, the National Youth Choir and in scholarships to music and art colleges, and have gained choral awards at prestigious universities. Many pupils do exceptionally well in speech and drama examinations, whilst others gain high grades in musical examinations on a variety of instruments. Pupils' performance skills are illustrated in a wide range of theatrical productions, from house plays to whole-school musicals and operas. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) is popular, with a significant number of pupils achieving gold awards either whilst at school or soon after leaving. Others have been offered army scholarships or been appointed the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet. In sport, pupils have achieved success at national level in sports such as sailing, skiing, rugby and cricket. Pupils have been selected for county and regional sporting academies which include shooting, golf, netball, lacrosse and girls' football. Pupils benefit greatly from the excellent facilities and the support and encouragement of staff and parents.
- 3.4 Standardised data used by the school suggest that pupils make good progress to GCSE in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Other data provided by the school show that pupils with SEND and those with EAL make progress which is in line with that of their peers, through the additional support provided by staff and their own determination to succeed. Data show that at A level, pupils progress in line with predictions. Many successfully gain places at universities and colleges with demanding entry requirements. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils said that they made good progress. Inspection evidence confirms this and showed that pupils made the most progress in the majority of lessons where careful planning, including building on pupils' prior learning, and the use of imaginative resources acted as catalysts for the rapid development of ideas. Occasionally, pupils' progress within lessons is slower because the teachers do not assess accurately their starting points and then fail to challenge or stimulate pupils sufficiently. A very small minority of pupils in the questionnaire expressed a view that the marking of their work did not help them to improve. Inspection evidence, including interviews with pupils, showed some support for this view. However, it also indicated some effective initiatives in this area, which, alongside careful departmental planning and monitoring, means that the recommendation of the previous inspection is met.

- 3.5 Pupils demonstrate high levels of progress in their development of knowledge, skills and understanding across a challenging and balanced curriculum. Pupils have excellent literacy skills, as shown by the quality of their essay writing, for example within the Year 12 essay competition and in drama and English lessons. They articulate their ideas and opinions with a high degree of fluency and sophistication. In modern foreign languages, pupils demonstrate a well-developed understanding of tenses in their oral work and are able to transfer easily between them. Pupils can apply their knowledge highly effectively, as noted in a classics lesson where they responded creatively to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Independent research work using the internet was observed by pupils preparing for a Spanish oral examination, allowing them to access unfamiliar vocabulary. Pupils' critical and analytical skills are outstanding, especially when guided by detailed marking which is linked expertly to specific assessment objectives, as seen in English and design technology. Pupils in the sixth form demonstrate excellent technological skills when devising highly sophisticated projects in design technology, ranging from an adjustable platform for soldering to the adaptation of a farm trailer with an innovative mechanism to carry hay bales. Creativity is demonstrated through some exceptional pieces of two- and three-dimensional artwork, where the expertise of staff and the excellent facilities are strong contributory factors. Pupils' strong physical skills are developed very effectively through the extensive programme of physical education and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. They are highly motivated and the norm is to always give one's best. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is illustrated by those taking further examination qualifications, for example additional GCSEs in modern and classical languages. Sixth-form pupils taking pre-university tests show particularly strong levels of independence, taking the initiative and showing leadership in deciding upon specific areas for research. Pupils in mathematics strive to improve their understanding, often well beyond the constraints of A level, setting themselves regular problems and competing with each other to develop an outstanding level of competence. Pupils are highly effective at working together where the positive influences of boarding mean that pupils see collaboration as second nature. Further contributory factors are the stimulating ethos within the school which is created through supportive governance, ambitious and far-sighted leadership and management, and the unstinting efforts of staff, including in the evenings and at weekends.
- 3.7 Pupils are highly effective learners, and rapidly develop a wide array of study skills. They are well organised, take carefully maintained notes independently, and meet demanding deadlines for the submission of their work. Pupils' revision strategies are particularly effective and supported by teaching which provides clear guidance. Pupils can draw appropriate inferences from a wide range of sources, challenge received opinion and defend their ideas confidently in class debate and in their written work, through analytical and well-structured argument. For example, in a history lesson, younger pupils were able to develop a sophisticated strategic view of the options available to the allied commanders in 1942.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with EAL and SEND, are strikingly articulate. The majority can speak with confidence, either within a small group or in front of a large audience. They are well informed and engage fluently and confidently in debate. This is because of the strongly positive relationships between pupils and staff, who actively encourage pupils to express their ideas. They are adept at using language appropriate to the particular context, as seen in an ancient history lesson where pupils discussed the fall of the Roman Empire. Most pupils write fluently, can argue cogently and the more able can incorporate highly sophisticated and technical language. Pupils are excellent listeners, and value the opinions of their peers and adults alike. In lessons, they seldom need to be told things more than once and are encouraged by the respectful and supportive environment which is created by staff. Pupils enjoy reading and older pupils study a wide range of texts

and other sources to enhance their learning. Many pupils read for pleasure and to enhance their knowledge of current affairs, and the well-stocked library, together with the ready availability of high quality newspapers and magazines, supports this by providing a valued resource.

- 3.9 Pupils display notably strong numeracy skills and apply their numerical knowledge confidently, benefiting greatly from the solid grounding which they have received. For example, within IGCSE, pupils in geography and chemistry were adept at analysing data, gathered respectively, in extended project work and in an experiment to investigate the relationship between concentration and the rate of reaction. At A level, pupils in physics dealt confidently with data from an experiment on an oscillatory system.
- 3.10 Pupils' skills within information and communication technology (ICT) are at a high level. This is because of the ready availability of suitable hardware and the responsive and well-trained technical support. Furthermore, the school's intranet provides a valuable source of software, and links to video and other resources which encourage pupils to use and apply ICT within their learning. For example, in a sixth form mathematics lesson, pupils used a software package to learn about normal distribution, and in A-level geography, pupils developed an understanding of the benefits of geographic information systems when studying deforestation. Presentation software is used extensively by pupils at all stages to enable them to produce high quality and well-informed coursework assignments, and sixth form pupils use bespoke software expertly to manipulate their design work.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils have a markedly strong moral compass. They express a clear sense of right and wrong, an appreciation of the need for rules in school as well as in society, and an awareness of their duty to adhere to them. They have a very low tolerance for unkind behaviour, including bullying, and a noteworthy ability to respect the points of view of others, whilst feeling able to challenge them through intelligent counter-argument. Pupils appreciate the consistency of the guidance and values which are promoted through the pastoral teams, centred within the boarding houses, in religious studies and ethics lessons, and within the life skills course in Lower School. Chapel services are also effective in reiterating the importance of 'integrity' as a key theme within the life of the school.
- 4.3 Pupils show high levels of self-awareness. For example, pupils studying ceramics spoke with pride of their highly creative designs, whilst still being able to identify areas for development, and pupils generally are balanced and suitably self-critical in discussing their work. Pupils recognise the importance of the richness and variety of their experiences in school life, seeing them as being central to their personal development. They are self-confident, but the timely and systematic review processes within the tutoring and academic programmes ensure that pupils are aware of specific areas for improvement and effective strategies for their implementation. Pupils are resilient, illustrated within the community service programme where Year 12 pupils make a significant weekly commitment for the entire academic year. Younger pupils say that they have plenty of support and helpful advice about A-level choices. Senior pupils feel ready and well-prepared for the challenges of life after school through the careers programme, the input of boarding staff and the regular series of presentations to sixth form groups, including by former pupils.
- 4.4 Pupils are proud of their respective boarding houses and develop considerable loyalty to them. Pupils in the boarding houses furthest from the school enjoy the sense of 'going home for lunch'. At this communal and relatively formal meal, beginning and ending with grace, they serve each other and are courteous and convivial hosts to guests. Senior pupils act as mentors to new pupils and are generous with their time, offering study sessions as informal tutors to younger pupils who are finding particular subjects difficult. Pupils speak of the value of the boarding experience in providing structure and organisation as well as in developing their study skills. Boarders contribute very positively to the lives of others within the school, serving in many positions of leadership as prefects, or 'Pollies', with diverse areas of responsibility, for example within the chapel or in drama, sport or art. Pupils are sensitive to their school's setting in a small town, and suitably watchful of their impact upon it. They support local charities and are generous with their time in volunteering, visiting the elderly and engaging in other charitable activities. One house held a 'Selfless Sunday', approaching local residents and asking simply, "Can I help?". Appeals for particular charities can be made through chapel services and pupils have supported and raised considerable sums for a charity which supports education in Tanzania and Kenya. Every house runs an annual fund-raising event, supporting a charity of their choice. House councils and the school council are effective mechanisms for enabling pupils to contribute to the running of the school and to effect change.
- 4.5 Pupils value the freedom to make their own decisions, and appreciate a graduated series of guidelines which provide them with increasing levels of autonomy as they mature. A small minority of pupils in the questionnaire said that staff did not treat them fairly, but inspection evidence showed that clear boundaries are set at every stage and that, where necessary, sanctions are applied consistently and in line with school policy. Younger pupils benefit from the supportive structures within the school and the boarding houses, whilst senior pupils

enjoy the opportunity to be more responsible for themselves. This enhanced freedom of choice, monitored sensibly by staff, helps significantly in enabling pupils to make sensible decisions. Pupils' maturity is illustrated by music scholars successfully planning and producing a major concert without input from staff, and pupils within the combined cadet force (CCF) making strategic decisions during command tasks. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions, illustrated by an address in chapel which was highly effective in discouraging them from blaming others for their own actions.

- 4.6 Pupils express a deep appreciation of the spiritual and non-material side of life, evidenced by their approach and commitment to cultural activities such as music, art and drama and in the importance which they attach to times for quiet reflection, such as the opportunities afforded by the daily chapel services. Pupils spoke eloquently of the positive influence of chapel services and their contribution to the character of the school. The whole-hearted approach of the school community towards the singing of the morning hymn is uplifting and indicative of pupils' strong sense of identity for their school. The role of the chaplaincy is central to encouraging pupils' personal reflection. Pupils actively embrace the many opportunities to develop their personality and recognise the importance of having a wider cultural and aesthetic interest.
- 4.7 Pupils have a highly developed social awareness which encourages them to make a strong contribution to the cohesion of the school community. They work effectively with their peers and are pre-eminently 'team players' who see it as a personal duty to benefit others. Many examples of effective collaboration were observed during the inspection, including within the DofE, musical ensembles and drama. Furthermore, pupils work collaboratively in a myriad of house events, some with an artistic focus, such as a recent production of *Habeas Corpus*, and others involving friendly competition. Pupils enjoy problem-solving, whether at an academic level within the formal curriculum, or within extra-curricular activities, such as CCF camps. Pupils are unfailingly polite, both towards one another and to staff and visitors. As a result, recorded incidents of bullying are rare, and although a very small minority of pupils in the questionnaire commented adversely on the school's measures to combat bullying, pupils at interview said that where bullying does occur, it is at a low level and that pupils themselves often intervene helpfully to resolve the problem. School documentation shows that any such incidents are dealt with quickly yet thoroughly, with the full involvement of all parties. Matrons exercise a very positive influence within the houses, and the recommendation from the previous boarding report to enhance their role is fully met.
- 4.8 In their attitudes and behaviour, pupils exemplify the values of courtesy and tolerance. Pupils are respectful of each other and welcoming to pupils who are new to the school and possibly new to the country. Pupils embrace the international dimension of the school, valuing the uniqueness of their peers' backgrounds. The school forges an exceptionally strong bond which links and unites pupils, irrespective of background, beliefs or race. Whilst aware of the importance of British values, they appreciate and are interested in other cultures and traditions. Pupils believe strongly in making their community inclusive and well-informed, and they recently took the initiative in suggesting a focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues during an awareness-raising week. Pupils are notably proud of their school. In the questionnaire, almost all parents felt the school is successful in promoting good behaviour and the values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.9 An overwhelming majority of pupils feel that they understand how to keep safe online. The e-safety committee, together with thoughtful and effective restrictions and monitoring of pupils' usage of ICT, help to reduce the potential negative influences of the internet. Pupils in Lower School find the life skills programme helpful in informing them about a range of issues

relating to personal welfare, such as mental health, alcohol and teenage pregnancy. The sixth-form provision incorporates a programme of external speakers, including a helpful presentation on sex and relationships. Pupils are very clear about how to stay healthy through exercise and an appropriate diet. A few pupils comment on the hectic demands of boarding and the tiredness which prevails towards the end of term. They enjoy the extensive opportunities for physical education, and sixth form pupils appreciate the increased range of provision, including options such as aerobics, sailing and girls' football. The strongly positive atmosphere within boarding houses ensures that pupils enjoy eating together, and there is a varied and nutritious range of choices. Mealtimes also act as invaluable opportunities for house staff to get to know pupils and keep an unobtrusive eye on them, where specific concerns have been noted.