



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Oakhill School

October 2021

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School's Details

School	Oakhill School			
DfE number	888/6012			
Early Years registration number	EY312065			
Registered charity number	1048514			
Address	Oakhill School Wiswell Lane Whalley Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9AF			
Telephone number	01254 823546			
Email address	enquiries@oakhillschool.co.uk			
Principal	Mrs Jane Buttery			
Chair of governors	Mr Anthony Baron			
Age range	0 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	270			
	EYFS	140	Juniors	56
	Seniors	74		
Inspection dates	5 to 8 October 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Oakhill School is an independent co-educational day school. It was founded in 1978 to meet the need for an independent Roman Catholic secondary school in the Clitheroe area. The school is split into three sections: the nursery, which includes the registered and non-registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings; the preparatory department, for pupils in Reception to year 6 and the senior department for pupils in years 7 to 11. The school's proprietor is Oakhill College, Whalley Ltd, and oversight is supported by an advisory governing body which is chaired by the chairman of the company. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new principal and two new vice-principals.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting remained open only for children of key workers. During this period of closure, the school provided remote learning materials for pupils in Reception to year 11.
- 1.3 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.4 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.5 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.6 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.7 The school seeks to focus upon the needs of its pupils and to provide a faith-based education for children of all abilities. It aims to provide a happy, safe and stimulating education within a family environment. It further strives to develop spiritual awareness, encourage self-worth and challenge pupils to achieve; the objective is that at each stage pupils will gain an understanding of the value of service and mutual respect for others, equipping them for the next phase of their life.

About the pupils

- 1.8 Pupils come from the local rural and urban areas, mostly from families living within a two-mile radius of the school, but with a number of ethnic minorities reflecting the make-up of the local population. National standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the prep department is broadly average and that in the senior department up to Year 11 is broadly average. The school has identified 35 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 26 receive additional specialist help. Five pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for two pupils, one of whom receives extra support for their learning.

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. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report 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, 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 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. 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.

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

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

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 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 In the junior department, 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 At GCSE in the years 2020 and 2021, performance has confirmed 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.
- 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.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 The school does not take appropriate measures to ensure effective oversight of health and safety procedures: records are not effectively monitored or maintained: Control of Hazardous Substances (COSHH) records are not kept up to date, and do not cover all departments. Instances relevant to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) are not recorded so the school was unable to demonstrate beyond doubt that such reporting occurs as required. Records are not kept to demonstrate that staff receive training in safer working practices. There is no effective monitoring of maintenance records and checks to ensure effective oversight of practice. Appropriate measures are not taken to maintain electrical appliances in a safe condition.
- 2.11 Arrangements to prevent fire are inadequate. The school has not ensured there is a competent named person to assist in taking preventative and protective measures, including firefighting and evacuation. It has not ensured that fire risk assessment has been carried out by a qualified, named person. The school does not have a suitable system for the provision of and maintenance of clear emergency routes and exits, signs and notices. No records of fire-related information were available for inspection and staff have not received appropriate training in fire safety. Signage was corrected and fire exits properly identified during the course of the inspection.

- 2.12 First aid kits have not been routinely checked and appropriately restocked. This was corrected during the course of the inspection.
- 2.13 The school has a suitable policy for risk assessment but has not implemented it effectively because it has not taken appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified. Risk assessments are not effectively monitored; they do not consistently identify clear hazards.
- 2.14 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 14 and 15, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but those in paragraphs 11 [health and safety], 12 [fire], 13 [first aid] and 16 [risk assessment] are not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure effective oversight of health and safety records to ensure that these are correctly maintained, in particular those relating to COSHH and RIDDOR, and provide training for staff in safe working practices [paragraph 11; EYFS 3.55].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that electrical equipment is maintained in a safe condition by carrying out appropriate checks regularly and recording these [paragraph 11; EYFS 3.55].

Action point 3

The school must ensure that it complies fully with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 with regard to planning, implementing and recording fire safety measures. In particular it must appoint a competent person to oversee fire safety, ensure suitable training for staff and fire risk assessment by a qualified, named person; provide and maintain clear emergency routes and exits; maintain appropriate signage; ensure that fire detectors, alarms and extinguishers are in good working order; and maintain suitable records [paragraph 12; EYFS 3.56].

Action point 4

The school must ensure that first aid kits are regularly checked and appropriately restocked [paragraph 13; EYFS 3.51].

Action point 5

The school must ensure that appropriate action is taken to rectify all risks identified; and that there is effective oversight of risk throughout the site [paragraph 16(a) and (b); EYFS 3.65].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff and proprietors

- 2.15 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.17 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard are provided. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

- 2.18 Accommodation for the treatment, examination and short-term care of pupils is inadequate because it does not include suitable access to toilet facilities.
- 2.19 The school has not ensured that school premises have been maintained so that the health, safety and welfare of the pupils is safeguarded. Some security arrangements are inadequate.
- 2.20 Cold water supplies suitable for drinking were not clearly marked as such. This was rectified during the inspection. No checks are carried out on the temperature of hot water at the point of use to ensure there is no risk of scalding to users.
- 2.21 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation in paragraphs 23, 26, 27 and 29 are met, but those in paragraphs 24 [medical accommodation], 25 [maintenance] and 28 [water supply] are not met.**

Action point 6

The school must ensure appropriate accommodation of the medical needs of all pupils by providing suitable access to toilet facilities [paragraph 24(1)(b)].

Action point 7

The school must ensure that the school premises are maintained so that the health, safety and welfare of the pupils is safeguarded [paragraph 25; EYFS 3.55].

Action point 8

The school must ensure that cold water supplies suitable for drinking are consistently clearly marked as such and that checks on the temperature of hot water are regularly made and appropriately recorded [paragraph 28(1)(c) and (d); EYFS 3.55].

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.22 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.
- 2.23 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.24 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.
- 2.25 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.26 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Not all standards are consistently met, and the proprietor does not actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate measures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and maintenance of the premises are not consistently implemented and there is insufficient oversight to ensure effective records are maintained.

2.27 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 9

The school must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Independent School Standards and the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met consistently, and that they actively promote the well-being of all pupils, in particular with regard to health and safety, including fire safety, measures and maintenance of the premises [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

- 2.28 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is inadequate.
- 2.29 The structure of the curriculum is excellent and meets the needs and interests of the children. It supports the children's development in the prime areas of their learning extremely well, including those with SEND and any other additional needs. All children under the age of two make good or better progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- 2.30 Due to the excellent levels of personal care that the setting provides, the personal and emotional development of the children is excellent. They feel safe, secure and happy.
- 2.31 Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and they fulfil their responsibility for protecting children in their care diligently within their areas of responsibility. However, proprietorial oversight does not give sufficient support to the work of the setting to ensure regulatory compliance in areas of health and safety.
- 2.32 Managers have acted on the recommendation from the previous report and have increased the opportunities for the youngest children to explore and develop their physical skills in the outdoor environment.
- 2.33 Leadership and management demonstrate a strong commitment towards continuous improvement through detailed, cohesive self-evaluation and have a clear vision for future developments. This ensures that all children receive the best possible support and care.

Quality of education

- 2.34 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 2.35 The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for children to develop their communication and language and physical skills. It strongly promotes their personal, social and emotional development.
- 2.36 Regular monitoring of the curriculum and of the activities provided ensures that all children are extremely well supported, including those with SEND. Detailed planning shows that next steps form the basis of the planning to meet individual children's needs and interests.
- 2.37 Staff have consistently high expectations for the children in their care. They have an excellent understanding of how babies and young children learn and develop. Carefully planned activities, which reflect the interests and stage of development of each child allow them to explore, discover and be curious. This was observed when older babies explored sensory shakers containing a range of materials including shaving foam and jelly with plastic spiders.
- 2.38 Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and take every opportunity to enable them to develop their language and social skills. They read and sing with the children, encouraging them to repeat words, answer simple questions and join in with songs and actions. Staff make excellent use of opportunities when interacting with the children to introduce mathematical language by counting and talking to the children about shape and size.
- 2.39 Positive feedback is given to children through appropriate use of praise and encouragement, so that they know when they are doing well and how to develop their attitudes and skills for learning.
- 2.40 Regular assessments are recorded on the child's electronic learning journal and tracked against the expected levels of development for their age to ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored, and their needs are met effectively. These assessments are shared on the on-line system with parents who are able to contribute to this by sharing their child's significant experiences and achievements at home.

- 2.41 The stimulating experiences that the children receive provide them with a solid foundation on which their future learning can be built. All children from the earliest age are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 2.42 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 2.43 Children show great enjoyment in their learning. They are very curious and inquisitive, and they are keen to explore their surroundings. Children make excellent use of the available resources in the rooms. Staff allow them to explore both natural and real-life objects thereby fostering the children's innate curiosity. For example, an infant enjoyed using kitchen utensils to strike a baking tray to make loud noises and babies demonstrated an eagerness to explore leaves and twigs by scrunching and squeezing them with their hands.
- 2.44 The children are able to maintain their focus on activities for appropriate amounts of time. Older babies were encouraged to use bricks to build towers after a visit to see the building site in the school grounds. They persevered when trying to balance large bricks and experimented in turning them so that they would fit together more efficiently. They spontaneously sought out the hard hats and put them on to return to work on the 'building site'.
- 2.45 Children demonstrate great pride in their achievements; for example, an infant was curious about large shiny balls on the floor and staff demonstrated how to roll them. The infant was encouraged to try and success resulted in the child smiling and clapping. Children can make links in their play, for example an older baby found the toy broom from the home corner and started to sweep up after snack time.
- 2.46 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show respect for one another, often helping each other to find things; for example, older babies were able to find their shoes independently and then went on to find their friends' shoes. Children respond well to gentle reminders about how to share things and how to play co-operatively. Prompt and regular attendance is encouraged, and robust procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

Personal development

- 2.47 The personal development of children is inadequate.
- 2.48 The exceptional relationships that children have with adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. Extremely effective care practices support the children's emotional security and development of their character, so that children feel extremely happy and safe. The setting has strong links with parents. In interviews parents reported that they are given the time they need to share information about their child with the key person during handovers at the beginning and at the end of the day. They are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care their children receive and of the significant progress their children have made.
- 2.49 Staff encourage children to take appropriate risks both indoors and in the outside area. Children are encouraged to take risks and be adventurous while being suitably warned about any risk associated with play using technology. They try to do adventurous things, such as older babies negotiating the different levels and surfaces when walking through the school grounds.
- 2.50 Staff know each child very well. The nurturing key person system helps children form very secure attachments so that they feel safe and happy in the setting and the high standard of care given to each child promotes their well-being and independence most effectively. They know that they can seek assurance from their key person at any time and they will frequently go straight to them on arrival at the setting.

- 2.51 Staff help children to lead a healthy lifestyle from the beginning of their time at the setting. They are provided with high-quality home-cooked food, fresh drinking water and fruit for snacks. All children have access to outside areas that are well equipped to promote physical activity.
- 2.52 Hygiene practices, which are followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of the children at this age are met appropriately. Staff encourage older children to understand the importance of handwashing before eating and support those unable to do it independently.
- 2.53 All staff give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they meet the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, and learning and development. Staff adhere to and promote strict guidelines about the use of mobile phones and photography.
- 2.54 Requirements to ensure health and safety of children and adults, including the implementation of school policies for fire prevention and first aid, are not met across the school site, including within the setting.
- 2.55 Staff are highly effective in preparing children for life in modern Britain by enabling them to make decisions, such as choosing a book to read and deciding what particular activity to explore. As they encourage them to share and take turns, children learn to respect and care for one another. Children celebrate a variety of British festivals as well as those from other cultures. Resources to support this area were less evident. All children are offered the same experiences. British values of fairness, tolerance and kindness towards each other underpin the setting.

Leadership and management

- 2.56 Leadership and management are inadequate.
- 2.57 Strong direction from the leadership team results in an enthusiastic and dedicated team of staff who share an ambitious vision to provide high-quality education and exemplary levels of care. They consistently monitor the standards of individual care for children and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained. They have high expectations of what children under two can achieve.
- 2.58 Staff are extremely well qualified; leaders monitor their performance carefully through annual appraisal. This is further supported by an effective system of individual supervision meetings, which enable staff to discuss issues, including their own well-being, which is taken seriously by leaders and managers. Leaders encourage staff to attend professional development courses to improve and update their practice. Staff effectively disseminate the information learnt on these courses to their colleagues. This in turn has a highly positive impact on outcomes for children.
- 2.59 Leaders know the children very well and respond quickly to the needs of children, including those with SEND. The setting has excellent links with outside agencies through the local authority and can access specialist help if required.
- 2.60 Leadership and management ensure that safer recruitment practices are maintained and that all staff clearly understand their responsibilities for safeguarding, and other requirements including those of the Equality Act 2010 and the 'Prevent' strategy.
- 2.61 Provision of resources and well-qualified staff is effective. Ineffective proprietorial oversight means that not all regulatory requirements are met with regard to health and safety.
- 2.62 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 fully, those responsible for the registered provision must take the following action.**

Action points for EYFS

The school must ensure that all first aid boxes are appropriately stocked (EYFS 3.51).

The school must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of children, staff and others on the premises [EYFS 3.55].

The school must ensure that it complies with all requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety requirements [EYFS 3.56].

The school must take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risk and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risk [EYFS 3.65].

Recommendation for further improvement

In addition to the above action points, the school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Enable pupils to strengthen their awareness of other cultures and diversity through provision of resources drawn from a wider range of cultures.

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.

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

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

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and display an excellent attitude to their learning.
- Pupils are highly articulate and confident in their communication skills, both orally and in their written work.
- Pupils collaborate effectively in their learning and help each other in and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils' development of intellectual independence is hindered by limited opportunities for them to take initiative in their learning and limited challenge.

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

- Pupils are confident, self-disciplined individuals, enjoying excellent relationships with each other and with their teachers.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong and show exemplary behaviour around the school.
- Pupils are welcoming and inclusive with a strong sense of service both in school and towards the wider community.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Develop pupils' intellectual independence by providing more opportunities for pupils to take initiative in their learning.
- Ensure pupils deepen and extend their academic understanding by providing greater challenge in the classroom.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils of all ages make good progress across the full range of subjects in the curriculum. At GCSE in the 2018, around four-fifths of grades ranged from 4 to 9, rising to over nine-tenths in 2019, slightly above the national average. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding have developed well across a range of subjects since September 2020 in response to imaginative and precisely focused

presentations and tasks on the school's remote learning platform during lockdowns. Centre-assessed grades in GCSE for 2020 indicate a similar level of attainment. There is no significant difference in attainment between the different groups within the school, and all pupils achieve the same good level of progress, including those with SEND and EHC plans. Pupils are supported in their learning by well-implemented procedures for assessment and monitoring, which have been improved by school leaders and governors in response to a recommendation from the previous report. These procedures are used effectively in the teaching to identify what individual pupils need to do to improve.

- 3.6 Pupils are highly articulate and skilful communicators both in discussion and in their writing. Senior pupils used powerful, descriptive language to portray fictional characters in discussion, while younger pupils effectively conjured sensory moods in their writing with adept usage of similes, metaphors and adjectives. Pupils are eager to develop their communication skills in modern foreign languages and do so successfully as seen in a lower-school lesson where pupils confidently gave the date and month in French. Pupils speak with understanding and confidence as they explain their choice of medium in their artwork or explore the strategies needed to solve mathematical problems. From the youngest age, children in the non-registered EYFS setting develop strong habits of listening carefully to each other and to their teachers as was seen as they took it in turns to speak and prepare for their yoga exercise. Pupils take pride in their written work and the work scrutiny showed strong, consistent evidence of good writing skills. A group of SEND pupils spoke of their ability to participate with confidence and enjoyment in discussions and written work because of the helpful guidance of their teachers and the encouragement they receive. Pupils with SEND were seen to be fully engaged in their learning in lessons. The approach of teaching from the EYFS throughout the school is one of engaging pupils fully in their lessons, so that they successfully develop their communication skills.
- 3.7 Pupils throughout the school, display good numeracy skills and are able to apply their understanding in other subjects when teaching requires this. In the senior department, pupils gathered and applied data effectively to predict boiling and melting points in physics, while junior pupils accurately measured distances in the long jump. Pupils showed good understanding of how to record, measure and calculate the temperature rise of water per gram when heating cheese puffs as they conducted measurements in calorific values. Pupils gain fluency in basic mental arithmetic skills, as was seen in the EYFS, as children happily counted aloud as they shared out their pretend snack. Older pupils quickly identified the number of outcomes and probabilities of scoring numbers between 2 and 12 when rolling two dice. Across the school, pupils develop competency in a range of skills and cope effectively with mathematical tasks and extension activities.
- 3.8 Pupils are confident in their knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) and effectively use their skills to develop their learning when challenged to do so. Younger pupils develop competent skills appropriate to their age and use their devices confidently to complete a variety of tasks ranging from taking photographs of their work to completing quizzes. Senior pupils employ their ICT skills effectively as research tools, as was seen when they researched the chemical properties of hydrocarbons and investigated the music of black American musicians. Pupils competently utilise a range of computer programmes enabling them to successfully create spreadsheets and design imaginative posters.
- 3.9 Pupils display good study skills across the school. They have a strong desire to succeed in their lessons and are keen to develop their learning although on occasion they are slow to recall previous learning. They undertake research tasks methodically and apply the knowledge gained to share their ideas and extend their understanding. Senior pupils, studying the 'Führer myth', were able to analyse the significance of the imagery and triumphalist music as they watched a film clip of Hitler descending from the skies. Younger pupils demonstrated very strong translation skills, from English to Spanish, showing excellent recall of vocabulary and correctly matching verb endings with personal pronouns. Pupils enjoy applying their good study skills across the curriculum but do not deepen further their academic knowledge and understanding when their learning is not challenged by teaching. Sometimes their concentration lapses on these occasions.

- 3.10 Pupils gain new skills through their participation in the school's co-curricular programme. They achieve well both as individuals and together with their peers, in a range of activities from chess, cryptography and sports to the bi-annual school drama production. Many pupils gain their bronze award in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme, with a high percentage of pupils achieving their silver in their final year in school. Pupils contributing to the school history magazine gained national success winning first prize from the Historical Association. The co-curricular programme is supported fully by the dedication of staff and the resources provided by the school's leaders and governors.
- 3.11 Pupils are very positive in their approach to learning. They work successfully in groups and independently, encouraged by the purposeful atmosphere in their classes and the expectations of teaching. Pupils understand the importance of taking charge of the work they have been set as seen when older pupils worked together with great focus to design a user-friendly survey to test customers' crisp preferences. Young children enjoyed working together as they carefully selected their own materials from the resources area to put together to make a collage. Pupils are highly attentive learners; they are diligent and demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their work, however they are less prepared to take the initiative for their own learning in order to increase their engagement with their academic studies. Pupils of all ages demonstrate exceptional kindness and care towards each other in the classroom. They are quick to notice if one of their peers has not understood the task and act rapidly to help and encourage. Parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, were unanimous in their appreciation of the impact the teaching makes on the progress of their children.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.13 Pupils approach their lessons and their lives beyond the classroom with self-confidence and self-assurance. These qualities are promoted by the school's successful realisation of its ethos of providing a happy and stimulating educational experience within a family environment where pupils are encouraged to develop into well-rounded young people, ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils are self-aware and understand their own qualities. They respond well to guidance which shows them how they can improve themselves in every aspect of their lives. They are resilient, hard-working and caring individuals who thrive in the nurturing atmosphere created by the school's leaders and teachers across all parts of the school. Pupils of all abilities are diligent in their work ethic. They value the encouragement they receive in the classroom and trust their teachers to help them improve their performance. They feel highly valued as individuals and, motivated by the strong example set by the adults around them, are respectful and courteous with peers, teachers and visitors.
- 3.14 Pupils understand the importance of making decisions and taking responsibility for their lives. Senior pupils spoke warmly of the support they receive when making subject choices for GCSE and how this enables them to make the right choices for the future. Younger pupils gain experience in making decisions in their lessons as, for example, when being asked to choose a South American country to study and present to the class, they tailored the presentation to reflect their own interests. Pupils gain experience in taking decisions outside the classroom in leadership roles as school councillors and prefects and fulfil the roles successfully. They develop a strong understanding of how to help each other as 'Well-being Warriors' and playground leaders. In their final year in school, pastoral prefects work with their teachers to organise assemblies where they speak about well-being and how making the right decisions promotes feeling good about yourself.
- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate an excellent appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, and this strengthens their self-awareness. Pupils are reflective and thoughtful: they debate subjects such as the difference between christening and baptism to gain an understanding of faith and beliefs. Younger pupils express their wonder in nature and the hibernation habits of the hedgehog while older pupils discern beauty in the designs of buildings. Pupils use colour and technique in their artwork to create expressions of

feeling and mood. Pupils are respectful of each other's spiritual beliefs and join together to recite the school's prayer at the start of the day with genuine feeling and warmth. Pupils of all faiths delighted in working together in a lunchtime club, creating a mosaic which portrays the Stations of the Cross to enrich the spiritual life of the whole school. Pupils develop a clear sense of worth about which values are important, celebrating each value in special weekly assemblies. The school's motto is 'Faith stronger than the oak' and pupils develop a strong sense of community underpinned by the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils feel very supported by the strong personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and pastoral network which strengthens their feeling of well-being.

- 3.16 Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, reflecting strong moral judgement. Pupils understand the need for school rules, and they appreciate the harmony that develops in a community which abides by the rules. In their interviews, pupils spoke positively of the school's system of rewards and sanctions. They value the rewards they gain and understand that when they had got things wrong, a sanction was deserved, and they would learn from it. The level of behaviour in lessons and around the campus is exemplary. Pupils are extremely considerate towards each other and adults. Younger pupils show maturity in their kindness towards their classmates, keeping a weather eye for someone needing a friend on the buddy bench, or helping a new pupil without being asked. Pupils display clear understanding of the unacceptability of any form of discrimination or harassment in response to the school's programme of relationships and sex education. They are welcoming and inclusive in line with the school's ethos of kindness and acceptance of others and any unkindness is challenged.
- 3.17 Pupils gain experience working with others through a variety of opportunities and this helps them to develop good collaborative skills. They learn how to achieve common goals as they participate in the DofE award scheme, prepare for school drama productions, play instruments in school orchestras and sing in the choirs. Pupils of different age groups collaborate in house events, developing the ability to work co-operatively, as was seen when pupils rehearsed enthusiastically for the house dance competition. Pupils become better team players as they participate in the house swimming gala and conkers competition, as well as in their sports events, and they support one another's perseverance, for example, helping each other as they undertake orienteering tasks in the school grounds. In their interviews, senior pupils spoke of the benefits they receive from making good friends and working well together, and pupils of all age groups are generous with their appreciation of each other's contributions.
- 3.18 Pupils show a keen awareness of the importance of helping each other and those in the wider community, fulfilling the school's aim of promoting a strong sense of service in its pupils. Supported by the school's commitment to fund-raising for charity, pupils choose the charities they wish to support and plan events to raise money. Encouraged by their teachers, pupils are quick to respond to local need, helping the wider community in a variety of ways. During the Covid-19 lockdown, pupils wrote letters to elderly people living alone and put together care packages which were delivered to the National Health Service workers at a nearby hospital. Younger pupils wrote to the Queen on the death of Prince Philip to express their sympathy at her loss. They were thrilled when the Queen wrote back to them. School councillors take their roles very seriously, elected by their year groups and learning valuable lessons in representation and participation in preparation for their democratic futures.
- 3.19 Pupils are proud of their school and are genuinely warm and welcoming. There is an open, relaxed atmosphere throughout all parts of the school and as a result of this, pupils thrive and mature into well-mannered, respectful young adults. They value their school as a place where everyone is treated equally and where it is considered a privilege to mix with peers from different cultures and faiths. Those who wish to follow the Catholic tradition prepare for their first communion and celebrate mass in the nearby church. Pupils are respectful of all faiths, encouraged and supported by the emphasis the school places on the value of inclusion of every individual.
- 3.20 Pupils know how to live healthy lives. They appreciate the healthy options at lunchtimes and the opportunities to participate in sporting activities to maintain healthier lifestyles. Pupils are keenly

aware of the importance of keeping safe. In interviews, pupils across the school were confident in the training they have received in online safety. Pupils spoke positively of the support they receive for their emotional well-being, citing the newly implemented lunchtime walks for those feeling the need for a little encouragement, and the PSHE programme where they can discuss stress and anxiety and how to cope with them. Pupils know that they can talk to the pastoral team, or to any of their teachers, if they have a concern or are worried. They are confident they will be listened to because of the open, trusting relationship that exists between the staff and their pupils, which reflects the caring ethos of the school.

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 acting chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited 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 Pamela Johnson	Reporting inspector
Mr Alasdair McBay	Accompanying inspector
Mrs Charlotte Brindle	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Susan Clifford	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mr Edmund Hester	Team inspector (Head, HMC and ISA school)
Mrs Valerie Holloway	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (former head of Nursery and Kindergarten, IAPS school)
Miss Jane Sheppard	Team inspector for EYFS (Head of Lower School and Nursey, ISC school)