

11th May 2017



Dear Parents and Guardians

I am delighted to attach a copy of our Independent Schools Inspectorate Report dated March 2017.

I will briefly explain what you are about to read. The school was inspected on Compliance and Educational Provision. We had a reporting inspector and four additional independent inspectors. They interviewed staff and over 70 students, at length, and observed a significant number of classes.

They found that our school “meets its ambitious aims” and that our students “feel extremely safe and well looked after in school because they understand that they are known and valued as individuals who are members of a close knit and caring community”.

A compliance inspection looks at the requirements of the statutory framework for education and decides whether the school is meeting expectations. If you fail your compliance inspection you are unable to pass your educational quality inspection. Schools who do not pass compliance are put into suspended membership of the Heads Association and an additional inspection and report needs to be undertaken. The grading possibilities are either met or not met. Inspectors review all the paperwork, logs, registers, communications and records, and they privately interview staff and students. Additionally, they review the parent and student questionnaires to see if there are any trends which need to be investigated. They also investigate any complaint made by parents directly or indirectly about the school and report back their findings. The following are inspected;

Quality of Education Provided – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements

Welfare, Health and Safety of pupils – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements

Suitability of staff, Supply staff and Proprietors – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements

Premises of and Accommodation of schools – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements

Provision of Information – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements

Manner in which Complaints are handled – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements

Quality of Leadership and Management – Judgement – Hurst Lodge MET these requirements.

We are obviously delighted to have MET all the criteria and as such no further action is required as a result of the inspection.

The Educational Quality Inspection is based on the achievement of the students, including their Academic Development and the Personal Development of pupils. Grade descriptors are Excellent, Good, Sound or Unsatisfactory. For a non-selective school such as ourselves to achieve excellent academic achievement would be very difficult as we have a diverse range of abilities. However, we were delighted to achieve GOOD with areas of EXCELLENCE. We were

delighted that the inspector highlighted the effective provision for more able pupils and for those whom the school has identified as having particular gifts and talents, saying that “The results are consistently good with students achieving significant value added”. The school is also praised for the excellent progress of those with SEND. Through observation and by scrutinizing records, the inspectors believe that pupils throughout our school make good progress from their starting points in acquiring a broad range of skills. In discussion with the lead inspector he was fulsome in his praise and said that the personal development of our children was beyond excellent.

We thus particularly thrilled with the Personal Development of pupils’ section which has been graded as EXCELLENT. The report highlights the pupils’ excellent personal development which illustrates the school’s success in meeting its aim to place learning, creativity and the building of self-worth at the centre of the school’s life. “Pupils develop an excellent sense of social responsibility with regards to the natural environment and the wider community. They speak knowledgably and enthusiastically about their learning. They enjoy exploring philosophical and moral issues. They show respect for and tolerance of those who have different faiths and beliefs and develop self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience. All of which demonstrates the school’s success.”

The report has two recommendations, one is to improve the use of performance data to identify and address inconsistencies in pupils’ achievements across different subject areas and year groups by improving the systems for holding and disseminating pupil data. The report does however highlight that pupils benefit from the effective systems that the school has developed for assessing students’ levels of attainment and progress. The second is to disseminate further the excellent practice observed in many subjects across the school. This is an area we have already begun to address.

We already knew that Hurst Lodge is a very special place and that our pupils do well both academically and creatively, in addition to being wonderful human beings. We are always highly critical of our practice as educators and strive to better our offer at every turn. It is therefore, extremely pleasing when highly experienced independent educators tell us what a wonderful place Hurst lodge is and that we are doing a good job. Congratulations to all the students and staff for their achievements. I would also like to thank all of you wonderful parents for your support and input, we value our partnership and are very aware that you help make Hurst Lodge the special place it is.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victoria Smit".

Victoria Smit
Principal



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

HURST LODGE SCHOOL

MARCH 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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school’s most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (‘boarding NMS’). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, 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 un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

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

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

In the lower years, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

At GCSE in the years 2013 to 2014, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.

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.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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.

An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

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.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

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

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, 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.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

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.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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.

The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with one of the directors. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Robin Gaff

Reporting inspector

Mr Christopher Bellamy

Compliance team inspector (Bursar, Society of

Heads school)

Mrs Sarah Godfrey

Team inspector for boarding (Deputy Head,

HMCschool)



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

HURST LODGE SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



PREFACE

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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 un-met 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 one of the directors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended tutor group meetings. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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 Robin Gaff	Reporting inspector
Mr Paul Cozens	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMCschool)
Mr Jeffrey Shaw	Team inspector (Headmaster, ISAschool)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Hurst Lodge School is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 3 to 19. The school was founded in London in 1945 as a dance school for girls. It took over its current site in Sunningdale in 1997 and began to enrol boys in 2010. The school is owned by a limited company and is governed by its two directors, the principal and her brother, Sir Timothy Smit.
- 1.2 The school is structured into two sections: Lower Years (EYFS and Years 1 to 6) and Seniors (Years 7 to 13). Boarders are accommodated within the main school building, with separate areas for boys and girls.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a holistic approach to education and to place learning, creativity and the building of self-worth at the centre of the school's life. It seeks to provide pupils with a secure and purposeful environment. Its objectives are to enable pupils to develop mentally and physically as far as they are able, and to educate them to become responsible citizens who respect their surroundings.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, predominantly from white British families who live within a 20-mile radius of the school.
- 1.5 The results of nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of pupils in both the lower years and the seniors is broadly average.
- 1.6 The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 66. Out of these fifteen pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They require support with a range of varying additional needs. There are eight pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), a very small number of whom receive additional support.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.7 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
 - Introduce a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning throughout the school.
 - Make sure that the planned introduction of appraisal includes all staff and provides opportunities to extend their experience through visiting other establishments.
 - Ensure that the directors identify occasions when their meetings are formally recorded and minuted.
 - Introduce arrangements to increase the pupils' knowledge of the beliefs and practices of other main world cultures.
 - In EYFS, reorganise the accommodation if possible so that the Reception class can become part of the setting, and ensure that the roles of the staff are clarified.
- 1.8 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.

1.9 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in March 2014 was:

- Improve facilities for boarders to use to contact their parents.

1.10 The school has successfully met the recommendation of the previous inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils throughout the school make good progress from their starting points in acquiring a broad range of skills.
- Pupils with SEND make excellent progress, because staff support them extremely well in helping them to overcome the barriers which they face.
- Pupils' achievement in a variety of creative and sporting activities and events is good and sometimes excellent.
- Pupils' progress is on occasion more limited because staff do not always make sufficient use of information about pupils' performance to identify discrepancies in pupils' progress, or plan lesson activities which fully match pupils' different abilities.

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

- The school is highly successful in meeting its aim of developing pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience.
- Pupils' social and environmental awareness is extremely well developed, as a result of the school's emphasis on fostering pupils' sense of responsibility towards the natural world and with regard to other people.
- Pupils develop a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life and very much enjoy exploring philosophical and moral issues.
- Pupils feel extremely safe and well looked after in school because they understand that they are known and valued as individuals who are members of a close-knit and caring community.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Improve the use of performance data to identify and address inconsistencies in pupils' achievements across different subject areas and year groups.
- Disseminate further the excellent practice already developed in some subjects in matching lesson activities precisely to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils, in order to raise their overall academic achievement.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils throughout the school achieve well. In the EYFS, pupil profiles show that most pupils reach and some exceed the early learning goals. The progress that pupils make from their different starting points is consistently good and sometimes excellent. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not entered for National Curriculum tests in all subjects. The results of standardised tests, as well as the quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection, indicate that they make good progress in acquiring skills and knowledge that give them a firm foundation for the next stage of their education. Pupils' results at GCSE have consistently been above national averages. This shows that they make good progress from the broadly average levels which they attain in standardised tests at the beginning of Year 7. Although there was a relative dip in pupils' overall attainment at GCSE between 2013 and 2015, the school's leaders have identified and successfully addressed the reasons for this decline. This is evident from the rise in attainment at GCSE in 2016, as well as current pupils' levels of observed attainment. Pupils' performance in A-level examinations in recent years shows that they have achieved well in relation to the average for pupils with similar levels of prior attainment.
- 3.3 Pupils' achieve considerable distinction in a wide variety of sporting and cultural activities and competitions, including at a local, regional and national level. As well as dance and drama, these include swimming, tennis, figure skating and parkour. Pupils' achievement in the creative and performing arts in particular is excellent. The school enables pupils to benefit not only from its own facilities and the expertise and enthusiasm of its staff, but also from the productive links it has forged with outside organisations such as local sports clubs. In discussions, several pupils commented on how effective the school is in encouraging them to build on their ability and interest in, for example, dance, drama or particular sports, thus enabling them to improve their performance in other areas. This shows the school's success in meeting its ambitious aims. The skills and knowledge that pupils acquire, the progress they make, and the qualifications they gain, enable them to proceed to appropriate courses in further or higher education, and prepare them well for future employment.
- 3.4 The school's detailed records, as well inspectors' observations, confirm that pupils with SEND, including those with education, health and care plans, make excellent progress in acquiring an appropriate range of skills, knowledge and understanding. This is because the school carefully and accurately assesses their individual needs, using external expertise when necessary, and provides them with high quality support, enabling them to overcome the barriers which they face. Pupils with EAL, including the small number whose levels of English when they join the school indicate that they require additional support, make good progress from their starting points, as do higher attaining pupils, and those whom the school has identified as having particular gifts and talents. An example of the school's effective provision for more able pupils is the success of those who are entered early for GCSE in mathematics. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a very large majority of pupils and parents agreed that the school gives pupils the opportunity to learn and to make good progress.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages develop good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills. In the EYFS, children gain a secure grasp of the links between letters and sounds, and of counting and measuring techniques. The school has enhanced children's learning experiences by enabling them to take part in joint activities with other classes, in line with the recommendation made by the previous inspection report. In the junior school, pupils make good progress in developing their reading, writing, mathematical and scientific skills, as well as in their physical skills and coordination. Pupils' enthusiasm and aptitude for learning are fostered, in particular,

by the considerable opportunities they have for outdoor learning. For example, during a day devoted to outdoor learning, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 developed their mathematical and communication skills by tallying the numbers of particular plant species and those currently in bloom, measuring their different sizes and collating and analysing the data they had gathered. They were then able to explain successfully their findings to their classmates. Pupils developed their creative skills by choosing and mixing colours to make hand prints that reflected their different personalities. Their progress was helped considerably by their teachers expertly and safely demonstrating the processes required, and checking carefully that the pupils understood what they were expected to achieve. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils showed their strong development of appropriate study skills, by their ability to construct different hypotheses from the available evidence, and to evaluate the methods that different pupils had used.

- 3.6 Pupils in the senior school build on the skills they have acquired and make good progress in a variety of subjects and disciplines. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils learned to tell the time in Spanish, pronouncing words and expressions with increasing confidence and accuracy. This was because they were given plenty of opportunities to practise what they had learned. In a Year 13 geography lesson, pupils asked incisive questions and engaged in productive discussions with each other and the teacher, whose strong subject knowledge and willingness to encourage pupils to work independently and co-operatively contributed significantly to their progress. Pupils also benefit from teachers' effective use of questioning to check and to develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils in both the junior and senior schools develop a good and, in some cases, excellent ability to use information and communication technology (ICT). Senior pupils spoke enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their development of a program which resulted in the successful launch of a rocket that they had constructed.
- 3.7 Pupils benefit from the effective systems that the school has developed for assessing their levels of attainment and progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give them detailed advice about how to improve its quality. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils indicated that they did not agree that they knew how well they were doing in their subjects, or that teachers' marking helped them to improve their work. During the inspection, however, pupils expressed their appreciation for teachers' marking, as well as the oral feedback and the individual guidance they receive. They confirmed that this enables them to know the levels they are reaching and to understand what they need to do to improve their work and to reach their targets. Some departments have developed sophisticated and effective approaches to tracking pupils' progress, which they use successfully in planning activities to meet the needs of individuals and groups. While there is some excellent practice, the use of such systems to identify apparent inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in different subject areas and year groups is not yet sufficiently widespread across the school.
- 3.8 Pupils learn well and make good or better progress in most lessons because teachers provide them with an appropriate range of activities which are well matched to their needs and interests. This was evident, for example in a Year 7 physical education lesson which enabled all the pupils, including those with SEND, to gain a very secure understanding of key aspects of rugby. This resulted from a sequence of well-planned tasks which took full account of individual pupils' different abilities, and from the teacher's high expectation of what the pupils could achieve. In a few lessons, however, the pupils did not make as much progress as they could have done. This was because, for example, some tasks were too easy, resulting in pupils finishing early and lesson time not being well used for the benefit of all. Although, in their questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils disagreed that they found most lessons

interesting, this was not confirmed by pupils in discussions, when many confirmed that they enjoyed lesson activities.

- 3.9 Most pupils display extremely positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, they show that they are keen to answer teachers' questions, to volunteer their own ideas and to listen to those of others. They are very keen to take part in classroom discussions, and, when given the opportunity to do so, are able to choose the methods that are best suited to their own abilities and the nature of the tasks. Occasionally, some pupils become distracted, especially when the activities are insufficiently challenging.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils, as they move up the school, develop into extremely resilient, independent young people who acquire the self-confidence necessary to overcome any setbacks they may come across. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents, including those with children in the EYFS, commented on the extent to which their children had developed in self-belief and self-esteem since joining the school. They also praised the school's pastoral care systems, and the way in which staff, including senior leaders, knew and looked after pupils as individuals. A very large majority of parents agreed that the school meets their children's pastoral and welfare needs effectively and that it promotes an environment which successfully supports their children's personal development. Boarders also commented on the way the school makes them feel valued and how the experience of boarding has enabled them to increase their ability to live independently as well as to co-operate effectively with others. Pupils with SEND make exceptionally strong gains in developing their sense of self-belief and self-worth. They play a full part in classroom discussions and lead assemblies in which they help other pupils to understand what it is like to experience the difficulties they face, and how they have succeeded in overcoming them. Pupils in both the junior and the senior schools were able to discuss their experience of the school calmly, maturely and confidently with the inspectors.
- 4.3 The resilience and self-awareness of the pupils enable them to identify their own preferred learning styles, and to choose appropriate methods for solving problems in activities in and outside of the classroom. For example, in an outdoor mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 selected appropriate materials to assist them in comparing and measuring different objects, such as lengths of rope. Pupils are very much aware of how to improve their learning because teachers support them very effectively to assess and to reflect upon their own and others' performance. In discussions with the inspectors, pupils commented approvingly on the ways in which the school encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning, and helps them to understand the consequences of their actions. These aspects of pupils' excellent personal development illustrate the school's success in meeting its aim to place learning, creativity and the building of self-worth at the centre of the school's life. They also indicate the extent to which pupils develop attributes that will stand them in very good stead later in life.
- 4.4 Pupils develop an increasingly deep appreciation of the school's core commitment to helping them to understand their place in the natural world and the importance of conserving both the school's and the wider environment. Pupils benefit strongly from the links which the school's leaders have established with local, national and international conservation projects, in learning to understand and appreciate the non-material aspects of life. This was evident, for example, in a Year 7 lesson in which pupils discussed and reflected upon moral issues relating to the threatened extinction of tigers in Thailand. Pupils' enthusiastic and highly successful participation in music, dance and drama lessons, and the way in which they reflect on others' performance, demonstrates their aesthetic and creative development. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to take part in philosophical discussions and to attempt to answer challenging questions. This was the case, for example, in a tutorial session, where pupils of different ages thoroughly enjoyed considering and responding to the question, 'How do you know that you're dreaming right now?'
- 4.5 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate an extremely clear understanding of right and wrong. In the EYFS, they learn to respect one another's property, to share resources and to take turns in using them. Pupils co-operate extremely well. For example, junior pupils in an

outdoor session successfully took on different roles in devising and executing a plan to transport materials from one part of the site to another. Throughout the school, almost all pupils behave extremely well, showing courtesy, consideration and respect towards others. In their questionnaire responses, a large majority of parents and most pupils agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Although a small minority disagreed that staff treat them fairly, those who spoke to the inspectors confirmed that unfair treatment was very much the exception rather than the rule. In these discussions, pupils showed that they fully understand the school's rules and the reasons underpinning them. Pupils' understanding of systems for administering the law of the land is strongly enhanced by visits, for example, to the Royal Courts of Justice and from local police officers. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to take on responsibility. These include serving as form or house captains and helping to organise sporting activities, concerts and school drama productions. Older pupils, including members of the sixth form, act as buddies or mentors for younger pupils, who spoke appreciatively of the support that they had received from their elders. Several pupils, including boarders, stated that one of the most positive aspects of their school experience was the sense that they belonged to a caring and supportive, 'family-like' community. Pupils develop an excellent sense of social responsibility, both with regard to the natural environment and the wider community beyond the school. They show this, for example, by their work in organising activities to support a range of local, national and international charities.

- 4.6 Pupils of all ages socialise extremely harmoniously together, regardless of their different abilities, backgrounds or traditions. Pupils spoke knowledgeably and enthusiastically of their learning about different cultures. Younger pupils had, for example enjoyed creating a dragon as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations, and more recently, making Easter bonnets. Pupils also spoke warmly about their participation in Christmas carol services at local churches. A very large majority of pupils and almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires confirmed that the school actively encourages pupils to show respect for and tolerance of those who have different faiths and beliefs. These factors demonstrate the school's success in addressing the recommendation from its previous inspection.
- 4.7 Pupils gain an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, including when using internet-linked technology because the school gives them many opportunities to learn about hazards associated with its misuse. Pupils also have a mature and appropriate understanding of the school's safeguarding and child protection policy. As a result, they know exactly whom to contact, both within and outside the school, if they feel that they or any of their friends might be at risk. Older pupils also showed that they were fully aware of the steps the school's leaders take to promote mental health and well-being. Pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, learn to recognise potential dangers and to assess risks through their involvement in the school's outdoor education programme. They participate in a wide range of physical activities and sports and through this learn the importance of exercise to a healthy life-style. Pupils' strong appreciation of what constitutes a healthy diet has been enhanced, for example, by the school's 'meat-free Mondays' policy.