



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Leweston School

September 2022

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School's Details

School	Leweston School			
DfE number	838/6025			
Early Years registration number	EY308762			
Registered charity number	295175			
Address	Leweston School Leweston Sherborne Dorset DT9 6EN			
Telephone number	01963 210691			
Email address	admin@leweston.dorset.sch.uk			
Headmaster	Mr John Paget-Tomlinson			
Chair of governors	Mr Ian Lucas			
Age range	0 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	601			
	Day pupils	517	Boarders	84
	EYFS	101	Prep	156
	Seniors	277	Sixth Form	67
Inspection dates	21 to 23 September 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Founded in 1891, Leweston School is a Roman Catholic co-educational day and boarding school, welcoming all denominations. The school is a charitable company overseen by a governing body. Boarding provision is available from Year 4, and the boarders are accommodated in four boarding houses within the school grounds, three for female pupils and one for male pupils.
- 1.2 The current headmaster has been in position since January 2020.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide the highest quality teaching and learning in a Christian community. It seeks to prepare pupils for life beyond school by developing their independence, resilience and willingness to meet the challenges of the wider world.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Day pupils live in the surrounding area; boarders come from the UK as well Europe, South America and Asia and speak English as an additional language (EAL). Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 115 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 60 receive additional specialist help. Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is spoken as an additional language (EAL) by 49 pupils, of whom 24 have additional support. The remainder are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 64 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and also for three pupils because of their special talents in sport.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. 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 (EYFS) 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 FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, the 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

- 2.2 In the prep school, 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 In the senior school, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2018 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the prep school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

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

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4, 7 and 23 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.20 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are met.**

3. The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 3.2 Leaders have clear aims for the provision and ensure that staff implement the desired curriculum well. Across all parts of the provision, staff interactions with children are of a high quality and contribute well to their learning. The setting has addressed the recommendation from the previous inspection. Staggered mealtimes have helped the management and organisation of the movement of children.
- 3.3 Careful planning, based on detailed observations, reflects children's needs and interests. Individual targets ensure provision supports all children, including those with SEND or medical needs.
- 3.4 Children are cared for very well and make very good progress. Their personal and emotional development flourishes within a safe environment where they are all valued as individuals. Strong relationships with trusted adults enable children to feel safe, secure, and happy. All staff understand their responsibilities and work together to keep the children safe.
- 3.5 Senior managers ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are fully met. All staff understand their safeguarding duties and are well trained to identify and report any concerns.
- 3.6 Leadership and management demonstrate a commitment to delivering the best care for children and practice is evaluated routinely. The learning experiences and carefully chosen resources enhance the outcomes for children and improve their life chances.
- 3.7 The setting prepares the children for life in modern Britain. All children are offered the same experiences. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and learn to care for and respect others. However, opportunities for children to develop their understanding of diversity through play are limited due to a lack of appropriate resources.

Quality of education

- 3.8 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 3.9 The curriculum is very well-designed, focusing on the prime areas for the youngest children with appropriate inclusion of all aspects of the specific areas of learning. It provides a wide range of experiences suitable to the needs of all children. Staff treat all children as individuals, and plan for their future learning appropriately overall. Staff ably interpret assessment information in identifying children with specific needs, including those with SEND, EAL or medical needs, and they provide the extra support that enables these individuals to make good progress. For example, staff play nursery rhymes in Welsh to support language development.
- 3.10 Opportunities are given to children to mark make to develop fine motor skills. Gross motor skills are developed through use of wheeled trikes and climbing equipment in the outdoor area. Staff readily engage with children to develop language and social skills. For example, staff introduced toddlers to new words, ice and frozen and then encouraged them to repeat the words to increase their vocabulary.
- 3.11 Planning takes into consideration all areas of the curriculum with specific targets tailored to each child. Regular assessments are carried out in a time efficient manner to ascertain the progress children are making and enable to staff to plan enriching activities. Staff actively encourage children's learning through positive reinforcement and recognition of their efforts. As a result, children become confident, independent learners and make good progress.

- 3.12 Children are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education and feel very comfortable making the transition to their next class. They are very well supported by staff who are excellent role models and provide high quality language experiences.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 3.13 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 3.14 Children willingly engage in imaginative play. They demonstrate very high levels of concentration. Older babies enjoy playing independently with teddy bears, looking at themselves in the mirror and making faces to express emotions. Babies enjoy exploring their environment and investigating objects from a variety of materials.
- 3.15 Children understand how to develop their skills because adults consistently reinforce learning routines and model effective learning. As successful learners, they confidently access resources and use their own ideas with enthusiasm. Young children choose and move resources with increasing control.
- 3.16 Staff praise children for managing their feelings and personal behaviour, for example in commending good sharing and being kind. Staff employ a consistent approach to reminding the children about expected standards of behaviour and manners. Children understand the rules of the room and are content to play alongside each other, share toys and resources, and learn to take turns.
- 3.17 Children make their own decisions about learning and confidently make their own requests. For example, the youngest children can make sounds to get attention in different ways. Older babies can play with a remote-controlled car, pressing buttons and persevering to make it move, laughing and clapping when they succeeded. Well targeted intervention by staff encouraged the baby to keep trying.
- 3.18 Parents say they are very happy with the provision and feel that their views and input are valued, and they are well informed about their child's progress.
- 3.19 Secure procedures for recording and monitoring attendance ensure any unexpected absences are promptly and effectively investigated.

Personal development

- 3.20 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 3.21 The setting supports and promotes the children's emotional needs. The very warm and caring relationships between children and staff foster a very positive culture and sense of belonging. Staff model and support children very effectively.
- 3.22 Children are very well supported when trying new things and tasks but are never over-challenged so they lose confidence. Any access to the digital world is well managed. The children's safety is paramount. All welfare policies are followed by all staff and all statutory requirements are met.
- 3.23 Very carefully implemented hygiene and sleep procedures enable children to be kept safe and well. Children are very well supported to become more independent in their personal needs. Staff constantly talk to children as they prepare for sleep, asking them about the comforters they need, promoting emotional security.
- 3.24 Children are helped to become confident and resilient by being constantly reassured, praised, and encouraged to try things for themselves.
- 3.25 Children are provided with a healthy diet while at school. The catering manager plans healthy menus in consultation with staff. The setting makes good use of the extensive school grounds to promote physical activity.
- 3.26 The very well established key person system ensures that the children are very well supported and enables them to feel very secure and happy in their setting. The thorough transition process ensures

the children move seamlessly from class to class, already knowing their new teacher. Parents commented on how sensitively this is handled.

- 3.27 Children know they should consider the feelings of others. British values are promoted through storytelling and other activities. For example, children learn to share and take turns when playing together as a group. Children understand the need to listen to each other, and staff sensitively correct any unkindness. However, the promotion of equality and diversity does not make as much use as possible of stories and resources to enable all children to understand the differences and similarities between themselves and others.

Leadership and management

- 3.28 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 3.29 Leadership and management have a very clear vision for further development of the curriculum and care practices in the setting. All staff are encouraged to contribute their ideas and work closely together to constantly improve. Staff have high expectations of what children under two can achieve, as well as a very clear understanding of the need to support all children so that they achieve the best outcomes.
- 3.30 Leaders ensure that they and practitioners receive focused and highly effective professional development. Practitioners' subject knowledge consistently builds and develops over time, and this consistently translates into improvements in the teaching of the curriculum.
- 3.31 Staff consistently report high levels of support for any issues related to their wellbeing.
- 3.32 Staff treat all children as individuals, and plan for their future learning very well. Staff interpret assessment information in identifying children with SEND, EAL or medical needs in order to provide the extra support that enables these individuals to make good progress.
- 3.33 Children make a very good start to their education because staff take care to make effective partnerships with parents.
- 3.34 Governors hold senior leaders to account for the quality of care and education to some extent.
- 3.35 Arrangements to safeguard children meet all the statutory requirements. All staff undertake safeguarding training including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Staff recruitment checks are carried out and recorded appropriately and induction procedures are thorough. Comprehensive policies inform staff of procedures to keep children safe. Staff have received the required paediatric first aid training, and all accidents and the administration of medicine are diligently recorded.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 3.36 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years.

- Enable children to strengthen their awareness of diversity through the increased provision and use of appropriate resources.
- Strengthen governors' oversight of the registered EYFS provision.

4. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

Key findings

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

- Pupils have an extremely strong record of sports, music and drama achievement.
- Pupils develop good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning.
- Pupils have a positive approach to learning. They are enthusiastic, well-focused and mutually supportive.
- Some pupils' progress is restricted by a lack of challenge in the classroom.
- Pupils' academic development is constrained by a lack of opportunity to develop collaborative skills in some subjects.

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

- Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and perseverance.
- Pupils have a highly developed sense of moral understanding. They readily take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils form extremely positive relationships with each other and contribute eagerly to boarding and the community.
- Pupils' understanding of the importance of staying safe and keeping physically and mentally healthy is extremely well-developed.

Recommendations

4.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Ensure all pupils make high rates of progress by consistently providing them with an appropriate level of challenge.
- Strengthen pupils' application of collaborative skills throughout the curriculum.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

4.5 Throughout the school pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND and EAL, achieve a good standard of attainment. Pupils make good progress in their academic work as evidenced by the school's internal assessments and scrutiny of their work. They benefit from the effective tracking

systems in place across the school, giving them regular feedback and academic targets. Pupils make good progress in the prep school and attainment, including in the EYFS, is above the national average for maintained schools with no significant difference between groups of pupils. Pupils' attainment at A level and BTEC in 2022 was in line with their ability with just over half of results at A* or A. This level of attainment is very similar to results in 2019. In the centre- and teacher-assessed results in 2020 and 2021, well over half of results were achieved at one of the top grades. Data analysed show that at GCSE the majority of pupils have achieved higher examination grades than expected over the past four years, including SEND and EAL pupils. In 2022, over a quarter of results were at the two highest grades and, in 2020 and 2021, in the centre and teacher-assessed assessments, almost half of results were at the highest two grades. A majority of pupils gain places at their first choice of university which include highly selective universities and competitive courses. Whilst a small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they did not receive helpful advice about careers, all those spoken to during the inspection said that they feel well prepared for the next stage in their education, speaking highly of the careers department's input.

- 4.6 Pupils develop good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. In the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils declared that their teachers know their subjects well. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils are appreciative of the supportive teaching they receive, not least in SEND and EAL lessons. In the pre-prep, pupils demonstrate excellent phonological awareness and a sound grasp of basic punctuation, evident in their free writing. In design technology, younger pupils clearly understand the process of design by experimentation and are enthusiastic in its application. Pupils develop good, and sometimes excellent, numeracy skills. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, pupils drew upon their own experiences effectively to enhance their understanding of pie chart use, whilst in a sixth-form class pupils worked successfully on velocity calculations. Year 9 pupils made good use of previous learning in a history lesson to explain and illustrate the difference between primary and secondary sources. However, on occasion, pupils' progress is inhibited when they are not challenged sufficiently to reach their full potential. This observation is reflected in a small minority of the pupils' questionnaire responses. Pupils' creative work is particularly strong and eye-catching textiles and the visual arts, rich in detail and beautifully crafted, are displayed throughout the school. In a sixth-form drama lesson all pupils showed an excellent level of skill in the performance of a devised piece of drama focusing on mental health issues employing Artaud-inspired techniques. Year 7 pupils showed a clear appreciation of the importance of language choices to create a sense of energy and excitement as they analysed writing thoughtfully. In the prep school pupils enthusiastically composed pieces in tribute to Holst's *The Planets* using a range of instruments and developing their collaborative skills well. However, opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding through collaborative learning were missed in a number of the lessons observed.
- 4.7 Overall, pupils' communication skills are good. They are confident orally and are usually attentive listeners. A wide variety of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities allows the pupils to grow as effective communicators through a range of media including musical performance, drama and the visual arts. In the prep school, pupils are able to present with assurance in the classroom and they read aloud with good expression. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils deliberated well on the role that humans played in the removal and reintegration of wolves into the Yellowstone National Park over some decades. Similarly, Year 11 geography pupils volunteered clear, concise oral explanations of why rivers deposit materials, using subject-specific terminology. In a SEND lesson, pupils worked together to discuss examples of nouns with evident enjoyment as well as confidently volunteering explanations to their peers. Pupils value the opportunities they have to contribute to the school community through discussion at school council and to take part in assemblies and chapel. The boarding community appreciates the daily informal moments they have for discussion with house staff.
- 4.8 Pupils' numeracy skills are good, with some pupils producing work of an excellent standard, supported by well-planned mathematics teaching. In the prep school, in their role as personal trainers, Year 3 pupils collected data on their peers' adherence to the 'Five a day' healthy eating message to produce

well-presented tabulated results with an accompanying graph. Pupils in Year 2 are confident in their knowledge of times tables as a result of regular practice in school. A-level science pupils apply numeracy skills effectively to manipulate equations, whilst BTEC business pupils demonstrate numerical aptitude in their personal and business finance calculations. Outside the classroom, pupils use numeracy skills effectively in GCSE biology fieldtrip work on sections of the school estate.

- 4.9 Pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) is well developed. They are adept at managing a wide variety of platforms, applications and electronic resources across the curriculum. Until the end of Year 9, pupils benefit from weekly computing lessons and confidently use their knowledge and skills in subjects across the curriculum, including art, modern foreign languages and literacy. In a Year 8 computing lesson pupils demonstrated excellent application of their strong coding skills using a construction robot. Sixth form pupils appreciate the opportunity to interact via an online learning platform to re-visit lesson material when working independently.
- 4.10 Pupils show good study skills, developing analytical and research abilities over time, as evidenced in their written work. They are encouraged to take ownership of their progress and learning from the earliest stage, using the 'Leweston Learner' framework which encourages resilience and inquisitiveness. All pupils benefit from the Personal Social Health and Relationships Education (PSHRE) programme which contains the teaching of revision methods such as note making and time management. Boarders speak appreciatively of how their study skills improve through designated evening study time, including opportunities for collaboration and support from house staff. Pupils' art sketchbooks show how well they synthesise information as they research and produce creative outcomes. In drama, pupils research context effectively in order to understand better theatrical conventions. Academic enrichment clubs further develop the pupils' ability to hypothesise, synthesise and analyse through activities include debating, lateral thinking and team building challenges. In the sixth form pupils build on these skills through opportunities such as the headmaster's essay society.
- 4.11 Pupils across the school demonstrate considerable enjoyment in and engagement with a wide range of activities. In the questionnaire, parents praised the successful introduction of provision for boys' sport and the inspection team concurs with this view. Some individuals achieve highly by being able to focus on particular talents through modification of the curriculum. Particular successes at international, national and area level competitions include equestrian, sailing, athletics, cross country and multi-discipline endurance events. Recent achievements by pupils include winning the sailing under-18 RS Tera World Championship; representing the south-west at the equestrian British Eventing Championships; taking second place at the inter-schools show jumping Royal Windsor horse show; winning three national triathlon competitions; and selection for the GB triathlon and pentathlon teams at the European and World Championships. Pupils also achieve ABRSM and LAMBA qualifications at the highest levels, successfully undertake professional cookery courses and win places at highly competitive universities. There is good take-up of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) at bronze and silver level. Pupils speak warmly of the volunteering and team building opportunities this brings.
- 4.12 The pupils' excellent attitudes are an important determinant of their good levels of achievement. In English literature, sixth form pupils synthesised key evidence effectively to evaluate the nature of Hamlet's relationships with other characters. Pupils throughout the school, including the boarding community, are strongly supportive of each other and enjoy working together, whilst having the confidence to proffer different views. They are very appreciative of the wide-ranging opportunities for collaborative learning outside the classroom through team sports, house competitions, woodland learning environment activities, drama productions and fashion shows, choirs and orchestra. In the prep school, pupils display highly positive attitudes towards learning and are keen to engage in grouped classroom activities.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 4.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.14 Pupils show excellent self-knowledge as a result of being encouraged to self-reflect regularly in assemblies, chapel, form time, in PSHRE lessons or within the boarding community. Pupils in both the prep and the senior schools report that the reward system is effective in helping them to build confidence. They gain self-assurance from the public recognition given in response to excellent work or acts of kindness and service. All pupils appreciate the opportunity to regularly consider their learning and create their own targets and action plans alongside helpful advice from their teachers. Boarders recognise that the nurturing nature of the boarding houses helps them to grow in self-confidence. EAL pupils new to the school explained how they quickly become more self-assured, feeling comfortable in building friendships, surprising themselves at how easy it is to become involved in clubs and activities. SEND pupils recognise the positive impact that the individual needs support has on their academic development and subsequent self-esteem. The school fulfils its aim in helping pupils learn to persevere and grow in resilience.
- 4.15 From an early age, pupils are encouraged to make good decisions which affect their learning and relationships. For example, they think carefully about their subject option choices, assisted by the careers department, as they progress through the school. Some pupils choose to train as peer mentors and say that they find this role extremely fulfilling. Boarders welcome the opportunity to help make decisions about the running of the house in weekly meetings. In the prep school, pupils learn to choose effective tools and materials when engaged in woodland learning environment activities. Pre-prep pupils risk assess activities with their teachers before deciding how best to proceed. Some pupils also decide to give time to other causes such as supporting the summer sports camps and volunteering in a local care home. As well as being of value to others, they understand that this adds another important dimension to their own wellbeing.
- 4.16 Pupils develop a strong understanding of the non-material aspects of life through the school's Catholic tradition which extols love for others and inclusion of all. Whilst a large majority of the pupils are not Catholic, they identify strongly with this philosophy. In a Year 7 religious studies lesson, pupils engaged enthusiastically in discussion about what it might mean to be made 'in the image of God', offering a range of thoughtful ideas. They appreciate the opportunities that chapel attendance, the PSHRE curriculum, and extra-curricular activities such as yoga, mindfulness, music and drama give them to think about their feelings and emotions as well as the spiritual life. Pupils' excellent creative contributions displayed round the school are also highly valued, allowing them to imagine and deliberate through art, textiles, photography and ceramics. They talk enthusiastically of the annual year group retreats organised by the school, during which they are given the time and space to ponder and reflect on a variety of non-material aspects of life. EYFS and prep pupils display a great appreciation of the natural world. They thrive in the school's rural location where they participate in regular and varied outdoor activities.
- 4.17 Pupils' moral understanding is highly developed. They readily take responsibility for their own behaviour and are quick to acknowledge when things go wrong. Encouraged by leadership and management, pupils recognise the value of talking through problems. They care about each other irrespective of gender or any protected characteristics and are generous in their praise of their peers' successes. They cite the PSHRE lessons as a very useful opportunity to explore relational topics and are firm in their belief that pupils uphold the school's rules and take great care of the school environment. All pupils appreciate the importance of kindness and Year 6 pupils actively demonstrate this value when they take on the role of buddy to Reception pupils. Boarders speak of a family community which is rooted in a deep sense of fairness and respect, where all pupils feel safe and valued. This is reflected in the pupils' questionnaire responses, in which a large majority agreed that pupils are kind and respect one another.

- 4.18 Pupils form extremely positive relationships with each other and contribute enthusiastically to boarding and the community. They also have excellent relationships with their teachers. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils initiate a range of activities to raise funds for various charities and causes, such as tuck shop sales, sponsored mufti days and static cycle events. Boarders of all ages work together willingly to ensure the smooth running of the houses, including the recently renovated mixed common room in response to boarders' requests. All enjoy bonding through the house singing competitions. Throughout the school pupils willingly offer support to new pupils through mentoring or through the buddy scheme, as well as informally. They are welcomed warmly by their peers and integrate quickly.
- 4.19 Pupils are highly socially aware and empathetic towards one another and it is evident that they feel at ease in one another's company. Pupils engage enthusiastically with a range of social activities, such as the weekly indoor games sessions for boarders or the Friday afternoon cross-country run. They collaborate extremely effectively beyond the classroom, co-ordinating fund raising for their partnership school in Nepal, and running a successful pupil-led campaign to reduce the environmental impact of the school. During the pandemic, pupils carried out daily acts of kindness in the local community as outreach work. Younger pupils write to A-level pupils to wish them luck as they approach their external examinations, whilst boarders include letters inside Christmas cards to residents of a local care home. Representatives of each year group meet as the school council, or one of its sub-committees, to petition for developments to playground facilities, food and sustainability, for example. Pupils are aware of improvements made through this body.
- 4.20 Pupils' respect for diversity is excellent throughout the school and all speak warmly of their inclusive community. They see no reason for division of any kind and value the school's culture which encourages open-minded attitudes towards all those with protected characteristics. Boarders appreciate the international mix in their houses. Though they are interested, for example, in discussing their different political systems, their overwhelming view is of how much they all have in common. Whilst the Catholic faith underpins the school's values, pupils are educated about and taught to respect others' beliefs. This is fully and successfully promoted by governance, leadership and management through the implementation of the PSHRE and religious studies schemes of work alongside the ethos they encourage.
- 4.21 Pupils' understanding of the importance of staying safe and keeping physically and mentally healthy is extremely well-developed. Leadership and management are highly effective in promoting the school's focus on the importance of well-being, supported by the governing body's decision to expand the school's counselling services within the well-being hub. Sixth formers may choose to train as mental health ambassadors and all pupils learn ways in which to manage anxiety through the very well thought-out PSHRE programme and in form time. All pupils benefit from a strong framework of internet safety education, augmented by focused assemblies delivered by year group cyber-reps. Conversations with pupils during the inspection supported the view that the school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils appreciate the wide-ranging opportunities for sporting activities and relaxing walks in the extensive school grounds and make excellent use of the facilities to keep physically and mentally healthy.

5. Inspection Evidence

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

Inspectors

Mrs Sarah Dawson	Reporting inspector
Mr Stephen Challoner	Compliance team inspector (Former director of staffing, HMC school)
Mr John Davies	Team inspector for boarding (Senior deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Guy Barrett	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Louise Belrhiti	Team inspector (Former assistant head, HMC school)
Miss Jane Sheppard	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Head of lower school and nursery, IAPS school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Team inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)