



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Alleyn's School

November 2021

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School's Details

School	Alleyn's School		
DfE number	210/6312		
Registered charity number	1161864		
Address	Alleyn's School Townley Road Dulwich London SE22 8SU		
Telephone number	0208 5571500		
Email address	enquiries@alleyns.org.uk		
Head	Mrs Jane Lunnon		
Chair of governors	Mr Iain Barbour		
Age range	11 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	1047		
	Seniors	733	Sixth Form 314
Inspection dates	16 to 19 November 2021		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Alleyn's School is an independent co-educational day school. The school was founded in 1619 and moved to its present site in 1887. The senior school is organised into three sections: lower school for Years 7 and 8; middle school for Years 9 to 11 and upper school for Years 12 and 13. Pupils are selected according to academic ability. There is an associated and adjacent junior school. Since the previous inspection a new head has been appointed and the school has opened a new lower school building. The school is a registered charity administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. During this period of closure, the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 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 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.6 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.7 The school is committed to nurturing holistic excellence for all, developing curiosity, reflection, determination, independence and a lifelong love of learning. It aims to promote well-being in a kind, caring and safe environment where every individual can flourish. It seeks to value diversity offering opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, to develop skills, insight, empathy, creativity, leadership and teamwork. As a community it strives to build local, national and international partnerships continuously honouring and cherishing a commitment to Edward Alleyn's charitable foundation of 'God's Gift'.

About the pupils

- 1.8 Pupils are mainly drawn from the boroughs of London and are from a wide range of backgrounds and nationalities. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of senior pupils is well above the national average and that of sixth-form pupils is above the national average. The school has identified 187 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia and dyspraxia. These pupils receive specialist support. One pupil has an education and health care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 42 pupils, none of whom receive additional support. Talented and most able pupils receive additional challenge within the classroom and through the extensive co-curricular programme.

About the inspection

For this inspection, the DfE requested a particular focus on ISSR Part 1 (curriculum, relationships and sex education, teaching and assessment), Part 2 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) and Part 3

(welfare, health and safety) to ensure that pupils are safeguarded effectively, that the quality of education provided fosters a culture of positive relationships and respect for protected characteristics, and that the school implements a curriculum for relationships and sex education which meets the requirements of the statutory guidance.

Details relating to this particular focus can be found at the end of the Regulatory Compliance section under the heading 'Additional information on particular areas of focus' beginning on page 8.

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. 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](#).

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

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2019 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2019 to 2021 have 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 and sex education, 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 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 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 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

2.13 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 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.

2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 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.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 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.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

Additional information on particular areas of focus

Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2] and relationships and sex education [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2A]

2.21 The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is underpinned by the school's aims and ethos. It encourages respect for others, paying particular attention to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act (a).

2.22 The school has appropriately implemented the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum in line with statutory guidance. The policy for RSE is available to parents on the school's website. The school has appropriately consulted parents, pupils, staff and governors and taken their views into consideration. The school's RSE programme includes topics that are appropriate for the age and ability

of all pupils, including the sixth form. It is sufficiently flexible in order to encompass any current issues, including those highlighted in the media. The RSE programme is taught in separate PSHE lessons throughout the school, combined with appropriate specialist input from health professionals. Pupils have opportunities for discussion in mixed and single-sex groups. Staff responsible for leading RSE lessons are suitably trained, including for the management of sensitive and personal issues and questions.

- 2.23 As a result of safeguarding concerns being reported in the media, and in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement, the school has placed greater focus on increasing pupils' understanding of consent, sexual harassment, sexual violence, abuse, respect, tolerance and inclusion, including race, gender and religious belief. The PSHE and RSE programmes were effectively supplemented by assemblies, discussion groups and workshops focusing on equality, respect, positive relationships, consent, abuse and how to keep safe. Discussions included situations and relationships outside of school including travelling on transport shared with other schools, going to parties and online abuse. Sixth-form pupils have been appropriately trained with regard to safeguarding and have taken a significant lead in supporting the school's culture of equality, inclusion, respect and keeping everyone safe.

Quality of education provided – teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3]

- 2.24 The age, aptitudes, needs and prior understanding of all pupils are appropriately taken into account when planning the PSHE and RSE schemes of work. Pupils are involved in planning the content and approach to the teaching of RSE and stated to inspectors that they would like further opportunities for discussion and to increase their contributions. The school is aware of this and is committed to putting in place extensive opportunities for pupils to discuss sex and relationships issues in relation to their experiences, understanding and beliefs, rather than solely from a theoretical perspective. Teaching shows good understanding of RSE and does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs; nor discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.25 The school's culture promotes the fundamental British values including mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. A small minority of pupils did not agree in the questionnaires that pupils are kind and respect each other. Extensive discussions with pupils indicated that this response refers to what the pupils term 'microaggressions' and insensitive use of language, frequently unconscious. The school has listened to these views and, through the recently instigated equality charter and additional discussions, is taking up this issue. The school has addressed sensitively issues highlighted in the media particularly linked to sexual harassment, sexual violence and discrimination. Pupils are supported effectively in developing their self-knowledge, distinguishing right from wrong and in taking responsibility for their own behaviour, whereby respect is shown equally to all as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

- 2.26 The school's safeguarding policy and arrangements meet the requirements of statutory guidance and are implemented effectively. The policy is supplemented by suitable additional policies including the code of conduct for staff, e-safety, safer recruitment and whistleblowing.
- 2.27 There is a culture of listening and of sharing information amongst staff and pupils. Staff and governors have been suitably trained to understand, identify and respond to peer-on-peer abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence and discrimination. The school maintains appropriate records of incidents inside and outside of school, which enable analysis of abuse. It effectively identifies any patterns of abusive behaviour and puts in place suitable early strategies to address them. Records confirm that there is clear and timely action, appropriate referral and suitable liaison with local safeguarding partners. The designated safeguarding leads and pastoral leaders are suitably trained. Discussions with staff indicate that they understand their training and are committed to implementing the correct

procedures. Staff access appropriately a range of support services and professionals, in order that pupils receive appropriate support for any aspect of abuse. A small minority of pupils responding to the questionnaire, disagreed that they can speak to an adult if they are worried or concerned. Pupils stated during discussions that this is because they know confidentiality cannot be promised. However, pupils stated confidently that they would be able to receive guidance from the chaplaincy or counselling staff and that they are provided with appropriate helpline numbers. Inspection evidence confirms that this support is in place in the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9] and bullying ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10]

2.28 The behaviour policy follows non-statutory guidance. The school states strongly that bullying and a culture of discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse, are not tolerated. Evidence from questionnaires, documentation and discussions with pupils indicates that there is little bullying in the school, but when it does occur it is dealt with effectively. The school has put in place suitable record-keeping, support and sanctions in order that abuse, including peer-on-peer abuse, is managed appropriately. This involves appropriate referral to social services and the police. The vast majority of pupils state that the school has clear expectations and that there are consequences for poor behaviour, including permanent exclusion for serious misdemeanours; these encompass sexual harassment and online sexual abuse. A few pupils indicated in the questionnaires that they did not agree that the school addresses poor behaviour. During extensive discussions, a small minority of pupils stated that this referred to insensitive use of language which they feel is not challenged sufficiently on a day-to-day basis, rather than unacceptable actions or derogatory language. Inspection evidence supports the views put forward by pupils during discussion, that moving forward includes building sensitivity to language used, not just eradicating derogatory language and attitudes linked to the protected characteristics.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

2.29 The school's leadership has responded thoroughly to issues reported in the media and to the small number of communications detailing allegations of sexual harassment, sexual abuse and discrimination by pupils from other schools outside of school time. Appropriate support has been given to victims of abuse and disciplinary action taken in liaison with the police when appropriate. The school has liaised appropriately with local safeguarding partners, the police and local schools involved in the disclosures. A full external review has been conducted. Appropriate communication with parents, staff, pupils and the wider community has taken place, taking into consideration confidentiality requirements.

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 excellent.

- Most pupils make excellent progress as they move through the school. As a result, they attain far above the national average for maintained schools in externally standardised tests and examinations.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are outstanding for their age across all areas of learning.
- Pupils of all ages are effective communicators who listen well and communicate effectively through the written word and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils throughout the school are exceptional mathematicians who apply mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding with confidence across the curriculum.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent study skills. Their attitudes to learning are excellent and underpin the high levels of achievement throughout the school.

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

- Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of themselves, are self-reflective and have a mature awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils have a deep understanding that decisions they make can be instrumental in determining their future success.
- Pupils' excellent spiritual development is underpinned by their strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.
- Pupils' moral sensibilities are excellent. They demonstrate a mature understanding of justice, rules and laws, and factors that impact the behaviour of individuals and groups.
- Some pupils do not demonstrate a strong understanding of how their own use of language can reflect and convey disrespect and discrimination at an unconscious level.

Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following recommendation:

- Strengthen further pupils' understanding of how their use of language can reflect and convey disrespect and discrimination at an unconscious level.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school successfully achieves its aim of nurturing holistic excellence for all through the development of curiosity, reflection, determination and a lifelong love of learning. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, the majority of parents and pupils agree that the school enables all pupils to achieve highly in all aspects of their education. Governors know the school extremely well and contribute strongly to the success of all pupils including through the governors' research prize, which challenges pupils to conduct and present research to degree level.
- 3.6 In externally standardised tests and examinations, attainment is far above that of the national average for maintained schools. Pupils' attainment at A level was consistently high during the years 2017–2019. Results in the centre- and teacher-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021 showed improvement, with the large majority of pupils achieving an A* or A grade. GCSE results are also consistently high with the vast majority of pupils graded at the highest levels. On entry most pupils have an ability well above others taking similar examinations nationally. Data analysed indicate that even from this very high starting point, most pupils achieve significantly higher examination grades at GCSE and A level than predicted, indicating excellent progress as they move through the school. The achievement of any pupils with SEND or EAL is also excellent, as shown by the rapid progress they make in relation to their additional needs or their starting points. During discussions, pupils spoke of the way the vast majority of teachers understand their learning challenges and support their learning, including providing notes and resources in advance of lessons. Some pupils with SEND stated that they sometimes feel overwhelmed when they have to finish work at home and would appreciate more support with this aspect of their learning. This high rate of progress for all pupils was confirmed in their written and digital work, lesson observations and during discussions. The vast majority of pupils gain places at their first-choice universities. Pupils speak positively with regard to the careers programme and the support given for university entrance. They achieve high grades in the Extended Project Qualifications (EPQ) and say that this course, combined with challenging and aspirational targets, enables them to aim higher. During discussions pupils spoke warmly regarding the way the support, commitment and enthusiasm of their teachers encourage them to overcome any challenges and to strive for the highest standards possible. They said that although a few lessons were uninteresting, most were active and challenging, enabling them to learn at a high level.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate exceptional knowledge, skills and understanding for their age across all areas of learning. Lesson observations and work scrutiny indicate that pupils' ICT skills are well-developed, and they use these naturally to enhance their learning, including for real time marking, homework and the sharing of their work. For example, as part of the Alleen's learners' programme (ALP) live online feedback was given to pupils in the middle school, enabling them to enhance their learning through accessing comments and questions raised by their peers. Pupils are intensely curious, confident learners who are able to solve problems creatively without fear of making mistakes. They write, use technology, speak, move and calculate with maturity, confidence and conceptual understanding that goes far beyond the assimilation of facts. In a lower school geography lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated a great depth of knowledge and understanding when linking plate tectonics to the formation of earthquakes. In a senior school physics lesson, they demonstrated excellent understanding of the factors affecting the size of the electro-motive force and used this to relate to topical applications such as wind turbines. Upper school pupils displayed the ability to consider with insight tone, tempo and warmth such as when they discussed developing their compositions with great confidence. Sixth-form pupils demonstrate a wide range of skills in film studies. In addition to independently producing high-quality film from a technical perspective, they embrace fundamental human issues as portrayed in their movie *Do The Right Thing*, produced as part of their work on American history. In a sixth-form philosophy lesson pupils understood and explained complex philosophical arguments using accurate and nuanced terminology to evaluate Descartes' conceivability argument.

- 3.8 Enthusiastic, knowledgeable and skilful teachers and excellent resources for all age groups across the curriculum, including for practical and creative subjects, support and enhance high-level achievement. Pupils seize the many opportunities presented to them by their teachers to follow their own interests and passions, whilst at the same time gaining outstanding results in their external examinations. Their extensive achievements are the result of the wide-ranging and extensive co-curricular programme. Pupils take part successfully in inter-school debates for modern languages and essay competitions. Musicians perform at a high level on a wide range of instruments including voice, and many achieve distinction in the highest grades in external music examinations. In addition, pupils throughout the school achieve high standards in a wide range of sports and the performing arts. They enthusiastically take part in the school's many competitions and performances and approximately 500 pupils perform in over 50 concerts throughout the year, including nationally and internationally. Pupils regularly achieve success at national level in many sports including football, netball, hockey, fives and water polo. Displays around the school highlight how pupils are enabled to develop their creative ideas, supported by teaching that embeds the knowledge and skills required to reach such high standards.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages are effective communicators who listen well and with interest to each other. They write persuasively, drawing upon their studies of English and modern and classical languages. Pupils have the confidence to express themselves articulately using a wide range of vocabulary accurately. This was exemplified in an upper school lesson where pupils discussed confidently the imperative in French. Pupils' written skills are particularly well developed, and the vast majority take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils of all abilities value highly the opportunities they are given to express themselves and were observed engaging in lessons with maturity, confidence and fluency. Pupils who spoke to inspectors used vocabulary that was sophisticated for their age. Middle school essays on *An Inspector Calls* include highly observant reflections on the way that language used by the characters reflects common ideas about social roles at the time that the play was set. They identified how specific metaphors and phrases convey meaning and indicate the author's likely intentions. Discussion with staff and pupils indicates that these high levels of communication are underpinned by wide-ranging discussions that are embedded into the learning, combined with the expectation to analyse text in great detail and depth.
- 3.10 The majority of pupils go on to take A-level mathematics and further mathematics, where most attain the highest grades. Pupils also enjoy considerable success in external mathematical competitions such as the Mathematics and Science Olympiads. Pupils throughout the school are exceptional mathematicians who apply their knowledge, skills and understanding with confidence across the curriculum and in their lives. For example, in a lower school physics lesson, pupils demonstrated sophisticated understanding of complex numerical equations to calculate force, energy and motion. Pupils' excellent application of prior learning in mathematics was evident in their work on the sine rule and its use to tackle more complicated questions involving acute and obtuse angles. Teaching of mathematics is discursive and inclusive, enabling more able pupils to operate and investigate at a very high level and all pupils to understand what they are learning and to develop excellent transferable knowledge and skills.
- 3.11 Pupils of all ages have highly developed study skills, are unafraid to make mistakes, thriving within a culture where pupils feel safe and are encouraged to be ambitious and aspirational. They use an extensive range of resource material to support their learning and are confident in using a range of strategies to find solutions to complex problems. They understand the need to question online information and they use higher order skills to hypothesis and analyse information. Pupils plan and organise their work effectively, read critically and reflect on the knowledge they have gained. They spontaneously ask challenging questions about their subjects and all aspects of the world and beyond. They are quick to recall relevant information and make perceptive links with other areas of study, arguing and reasoning logically. The pupils are creative and persistent and pursue their own academic interests at an extremely high level, for example, through the upper school critical thinking course, the EPQ, the ALP and the governors' research prize.

- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are excellent and underpin their high levels of achievement. They demonstrate initiative and independence as well as collaboration and discussion at an extremely high level. Pupils maximise their opportunities both within and outside of school, and as highlighted in the parental and pupil questionnaires. The school equips all pupils to develop the values and skills they need in later life.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of themselves, are self-reflective and have a strong awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Their sensitivity towards others is striking. There is a culture of hard work, resilience and celebrating effort. Most pupils have a very mature appreciation of how to improve their learning, as confirmed in older pupils' personal reflections on their progress, personal achievements and what they could work on to further their self-development. Pupils throughout the school are comfortable expressing themselves and will put forward their views confidently even if this can be uncomfortable. For example, following discussions on the death of a victim of sexual assault, those who identify as female pupils strongly presented their feelings in order that those who identify as male could begin to understand their worries, anger and fears. During wide-ranging discussions with inspectors, pupils said that the opportunity to discuss issues including harassment, sexual violence, abuse and discrimination with teachers who were mostly well-informed, as well as professionals, enabled them to develop self-understanding and life skills at a deep level. Many stated that they would like to strengthen further the culture of their school by ensuring that any use of language that erodes the principles of equality is challenged and eradicated.
- 3.15 Pupils have a deep understanding that decisions they make can be instrumental in determining their future success. However, during discussions they highlighted strongly the importance of recognising when they have made a mistake and of being able to make better choices going forward. Most are able to prioritise workload, in and outside of the classroom and to make key decisions balancing all the variables. For example, Year 11 pupils discussed at length their decision-making process when deciding upon GCSE options. They said that significant support from the school enabled them to make these important decisions. During discussions, pupils were keen to discuss decisions that impact them within the wider world. They are particularly concerned about sustainability and the impact of pollution and global warming. Their passion and commitment are evident throughout the school, which means that initiatives such as sustainability week are taken seriously and become embedded within the life of the school.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate their strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life in assemblies, services, the curriculum and through their daily interactions in school. During interviews, older pupils explained that having times for reflection support their personal and spiritual growth. Excellent spiritual development was seen in the scrutiny of work. For example, work from lower school pupils contained sustained and critical reflections of the Bible, considering whether or not it can be understood as representing the word of God, and how those of different religions might respond to it. Pupils' work in the middle school showed substantial understanding for the pupils' age of Aquinas's and Paley's arguments for the existence of God, exploring ideas such as that of 'infinite regress' with clear understanding. As they grow older, pupils are able to link philosophies and religious ideas to their own experience, such as in the upper school where work featured highly informed summaries and critiques of religious views about contraception. Artwork in books and displayed across the school conveys a deep aesthetic appreciation. For example, upper school art projects include highly articulate reflections on themes such as the beauty of nature. In a middle school English lesson pupils demonstrated deep spiritual understanding through their responses to images about hunger.
- 3.17 Pupils' moral sensibilities are excellent. They demonstrate a mature understanding of justice, rules and laws and factors that impact the behaviour of individuals and groups. They engage responsibly in

challenging discussions in their lessons, in co-curricular activities and in societies that they organise themselves, such as the LGBTQ+ society. During discussions they convey a deep understanding and awareness of ethical implications regarding how people treat each other in society and in school. This moral awareness is also evident in pupils' work. Middle school work on *Macbeth* exhibits pupils' sophisticated understanding of how Lady Macbeth's progression through the play reflects Shakespeare's key moral themes regarding conscience, ambition, the proper order of things and moral responsibility. The oldest pupils' work conveys a very strong identification of ethical matters relating to enslavement and racial segregation in America in previous centuries. Teachers encourage pupils to observe and reflect deeply on aspects of texts that relate to equality and the fair treatment of others, based upon the principles of human rights. Through opportunities such as volunteering, they display a genuine desire to be philanthropic.

- 3.18 Pupils are collaborative learners, mostly supporting each other in a respectful and sensitive way. All genders were observed communicating and collaborating positively with ease. Upon entry into lower school, pupils begin building their social skills through a comprehensive induction that includes teambuilding and problem-solving sessions. As they move through the school, pupils develop their social skills including through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and Combined Cadet Force. Pupils spoke about supporting each other through a variety of challenges, including how to use a defibrillator. During discussions with inspectors, pupils organised themselves adeptly into social groups and discussed a range of issues in a thoughtful and inclusive manner.
- 3.19 Pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves, particularly through the work of their charities committee. Their contribution to others and the school community is outstanding. The wide range of co-curricular activities enables all pupils to make a positive contribution to the life of the school and beyond. Pupils readily take the lead during house assemblies and gather ideas for the school council. They are deeply committed to supporting the wider community. For example, middle school pupils take part in *Saturday Maths* and *Alley's Academy*, teaching and coaching younger pupils from local primary schools. Middle school pupils set up a local food and second-hand clothes bank which is ongoing, and lower school pupils attend and support a local care home for people suffering from dementia.
- 3.20 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of diversity and overall display a kind and respectful approach toward others. In discussions with inspectors, they demonstrated their deep appreciation of issues relating to discrimination, equal rights and equal treatment. However, they also indicated that some pupils do not exhibit an equally strong understanding of how their own use of language can reflect and convey disrespect and discrimination at an unconscious level. Pupils appreciate the opportunities given for discussion and report that they would like further opportunities to work with staff to enhance the culture of the school, in order that there is even greater sensitivity and inclusion. This vision, which comes from the pupils, was demonstrated in their outstanding and thought-provoking production of *Guys and Dolls* where pupils had adapted the script and the casting to portray their message that biological sex, race, religion or culture are irrelevant to status or role in society.
- 3.21 Pupils exhibit a substantial understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe including the importance of healthy eating, exercise and positive mental health. A wide range of physical activities, the availability of nutritious meals and snacks and a comprehensive PSHE programme contribute strongly to pupils' ability to have a healthy lifestyle where achievement and personal development are well-balanced. In discussions with inspectors, pupils conveyed their deep understanding of issues in society that have the potential to affect their personal safety, and of strategies to deal with these. PSHE notebooks contain pupils' developed reflection on their own learning and understanding how to keep themselves safe, as seen, for example, in advanced and sustained reflections regarding physical and verbal abuse, consent, controlling behaviour and gaslighting. During discussions most pupils stated that they would seek appropriate help from school and professionals for their friends or themselves if they had any concerns.

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 chair of governors, the vice chair of governors and the governor responsible for safeguarding, observed a sample of the co-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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

Dr Patricia Preedy	Reporting inspector
Mr Steven Popper	Accompanying inspector
Mr Devin Cassidy	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Hadrian Briggs	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC and GSA school)
Ms Joanne Hayward	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Ms Lucy Matthews	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Caroline Rogerson	Team inspector (Head of senior school, HMC school)
Mr Chris Townsend	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC School)
Mr Alun Watkins	Team Inspector (Retired headmaster, HMC school)