



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

James Allen's Girls' School

November 2021

Contents

School's Details		3
1. Background Information		4
About the school		4
What the school seeks to do		4
About the pupils		4
About the inspection		4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection		6
Preface		6
Key findings		7
PART 1 – Quality of education provided		7
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		7
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils		7
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors		7
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools		8
PART 6 – Provision of information		8
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled		8
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools		8
Additional information on particular areas of focus		8
3. Educational Quality Inspection		11
Preface		11
Key findings		11
Recommendation		11
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements		11
The quality of the pupils' personal development		14
4. Inspection Evidence		16

School's Details

School	James Allen's Girls' School			
DfE number	210/6002			
Registered charity number	1124853			
Address	James Allen's Girls' School East Dulwich Grove London SE22 8TE			
Telephone number	020 8693 1181			
Email address	headmistress@jags.org.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Alex Hutchinson			
Chair of governors	Mr David Miller			
Age range	4 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1153			
	EYFS	35	Juniors	266
	Seniors	648	Sixth Form	204
Inspection dates	15 to 19 November 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 James Allen's Girls' School is a day school for female pupils. The school comprises: a pre-prep, for pupils aged 4 to 7 years, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); a prep for those aged 7 to 11 years; the senior section for pupils aged 11 to 16 years; and a sixth form. The school was founded by James Allen in 1741 and moved to its present 22-acre site in north Dulwich, in the inner London borough of Southwark, in 1886. The pre-prep is located some 200 yards away from the main site in separate accommodation. The school is a charity and became a company limited by guarantee in 2008. It is administered by a governing body. Since the previous inspection in November 2017, a new head and chair of governors have been appointed.
- 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.
- 1.7 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.8 The school aims to celebrate a diverse and inclusive community; to champion social awareness and sustainability; to empower courage, creativity and compassion in each student; to inspire pupils to be aspirational and authentic lifelong learners and leaders; and to nurture respectful, reliant and kind individuals.

About the pupils

- 1.9 All pupils reside in the UK; the pupil body is made up from many international families that reside in London. The pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic and economic backgrounds, travelling to the school from over 20 London boroughs. Pupils are of above average ability. The school has identified 145 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and 100 receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 65 pupils with 9 receiving specialist support across the junior and senior schools. All pupils are considered of high ability with opportunities provided to challenge their particular gifts or talents.

About the inspection

For this inspection, the DfE requested a particular focus on ISSR Part 1 (curriculum, relationships and sex education and teaching), 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. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

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

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

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

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, 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

- 2.2 In the junior 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 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).
- 2.4 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).
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.8 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.9 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.13 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

2.14 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.

2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] 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, 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.

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

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

2.21 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]

2.22 In response to concerns raised in March 2021 about pupils from the school, both current and in the past, being victims of inappropriate sexual harassment, abuse and misogynistic language by individuals outside the school community, senior leaders undertook a thorough review of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Interviews with pupils, questionnaires and parental consultations resulted in effective additions to the policy and schemes of work. The school reviews the effectiveness of the programme at the end of each taught unit ensuring delivery and content are appropriate. A programme of external speakers has been extended to include further advice on personal safety. The current PSHE programme includes: suitable coverage of internet safety; peer pressure; mental health and well-being; alcohol and drug abuse; healthy relationships; gender

equity; body image and self-esteem; and equal rights, with the focus on female rights; consent; peer-on-peer abuse; and coercive relationships. The programme is taught by suitably trained staff, including nurses, who have chosen to teach the subject.

- 2.23 During the inspection, pupils reported varied views about the content of the programme. Whilst recognising that the school has provided extensive coverage of most PSHE content, which inspectors agree is appropriate, they indicated that some aspects still lack sufficient detail or are insufficiently age-appropriate to be of practical help to them in all circumstances. The school is further reviewing the policy in light of this information.

Quality of education provided – relationships and sex education and teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2A and 3]

- 2.24 A suitable written relationships and sex education (RSE) policy is available to parents and is supported by appropriate schemes of work which follow recommended guidelines. The policy, plans and schemes of work take appropriate account of the ages, needs and aptitudes of pupils. The school has consulted with parents about the teaching of RSE and given them the option for their child to opt out of the sex education content of the programme. The policy has been reviewed since March 2021 by the risk and compliance committee of the governors to ensure it is suitable and covers sufficient guidance for the future safety of pupils. Inspection evidence confirms it is suitable. The policy is effectively taught by suitably trained staff.

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

- 2.25 The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy which provides suitable arrangements to promote the welfare of pupils and which has been recently reviewed by the governing body. The policy is effectively implemented, overseen by an experienced and knowledgeable safeguarding team. This includes a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a team of deputies (DDSLs) and they are supported by school counsellors and a nursing team. They have all received the appropriate level of training within the last two years. Training for all staff, including those new to the school, is up to date and consistent with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*. Staff are required to demonstrate that they have read and understood both Part 1 and Annex B. Recent training focused particularly on peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment, and mental health. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and the reporting procedures with regard to reporting any safeguarding concerns including allegations about adults working in the school. Staff and pupils report full confidence in the DSL team and reported that leadership and management are always supportive and have promoted a strong and secure safeguarding culture. Evidence indicates that the DSL has a good relationship with the local children's services and the LADO, makes referrals promptly and seeks advice when required.
- 2.26 In response to concerns raised in March 2021 about pupils from the school, both current and in the past, being victims of inappropriate sexual harassment, abuse and misogynistic language by individuals outside the school community, senior leaders undertook a thorough review of the school's safeguarding practice and associated policies. All staff and governors received further training to understand, identify and how to respond to sexual harassment; sexual violence, including online sexual abuse, and peer-on-peer sexual abuse. Interviews were held with current and past pupils. The school has ensured it has a robust behaviour and sanctions policy that is effectively implemented to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated. The school offered support to any pupil affected by inappropriate behaviour, sexual harassment or violence; talks took place with pupils individually and in groups. Any relevant incidents were appropriately referred, including to external agencies. The school clarified reporting lines for pupils, including contact details to ensure pupils knew how to report any abuse, including outside help lines.
- 2.27 During the inspection, pupils reported that they considered the school to have made every effort at the time to handle the concerns and ensure pupils felt sufficiently safeguarded. They indicated that they would report any future concerns if they happened in school but did identify hesitancy about

reporting concerns that happened away from school, in their social time. A number of reasons were given for this hesitancy, including fear of reprisals from people they know; lack of clarity about what would happen to the information and the degree of confidentiality they understood they could expect; an unwillingness for their own school image to be harmed by such reports; and the trauma of re-living any abuse. They reported that they mostly handle any inappropriate online messages by blocking senders. This response they saw as normal procedure.

- 2.28 The school action plan emphasises the need for reporting lines to be continually emphasised to pupils including the need to report abuse from outside of school. The school has responded effectively to the feedback by the inspection that planning additional clarification of reporting lines and confidentiality and further highlighting the many ways pupils can report any abuse that occurs both in and out of school is necessary.

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

- 2.29 The governors, senior leaders, and management at all levels, have demonstrated a pro-active approach to maintaining a safe and healthy culture in the school. They constantly review, update, and improve their practice and guidance for staff to ensure that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted at all times. The governors and senior leadership responded quickly and appropriately to the reports concerning safeguarding in March 2021. An action plan was devised and immediately implemented by the governors and senior leaders which ensures effective support is given to pupils. This action plan is kept under review and the inspection found it has been effective in providing an overview of safeguarding procedures.

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'.

Key findings

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

- Pupils are highly able and make excellent progress to attain exceptional examination results and achieve high levels of scholarship.
- Pupils have excellent communication skills as a result of the many opportunities they have to debate and discuss both in and out of the classroom.
- Pupils have exceptional independent study skills and attitudes to learning which contribute to their extremely high levels of achievement.
- Pupils' achievements are considerable in a wide range of extra academic and creative pursuits, many of which they initiate themselves.

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

- Pupils are exceptionally mature, confident and informed young people who take excellent advantage of the many opportunities provided for them.
- Pupils make many valuable contributions to school life through their passionate interest and ability to develop academic societies which promote a socially and culturally inclusive school community.
- Pupils understand the importance of developing their creative and physical education to provide them with a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils readily take on, and are successful in, their many positions of responsibility supported by a dedicated school staff.

Recommendation

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

- to ensure that use of the pupils' sophisticated digital learning is encouraged equally across all areas of the curriculum.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.4 The range and quality of pupil achievements across the whole school are consistently extremely high and fulfil wholly the school aim to inspire aspirational and authentic lifelong learners and leaders. The parents and pupils, in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, recognised the academic excellence promoted by the school. Inspection evidence supports these views. Pupils are highly able

and all, including those with SEND, make excellent progress as they go through the school, achieving results in examinations higher than those predicted on their arrival at the school as a result of support by dedicated staff. They are encouraged to explore beyond the confines of their subjects and do so. Pupils take excellent advantage of the wide range of opportunities provided for them by a curriculum which provides considerable depth and breadth, and which promotes learning as much outside the classroom as in.

- 3.5 Data provided by the junior school from externally standardised tests and examinations, including the EYFS Profile, show that pupils' attainment is above that of the national average for those taking similar tests. Pupils are very successful in gaining scholarships, not only for academic work, but also for art, sport and music for entry to academically selective senior schools. The large majority proceed directly to the senior school. Examination results at GCSE and A level for 2017–2019 were well above the national average for maintained schools. Most pupils achieved the very highest grades of A* or A or equivalent numbered grades in GCSE in all subjects. Centre-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021 show results consistent with this attainment. Pupils are keen to access the enrichment programme in the sixth form. This enables them to take an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) with the majority achieving an A* or A grade. Consequently, almost all pupils achieve places at highly selective universities in a range of disciplines with the highest entry criteria. Across the school SEND pupils are equally successful in their attainment.
- 3.6 Pupils are highly proficient in the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas of learning. They are inquisitive and independent learners and are highly engaged in their work from a young age. Excellent foundations are laid in Reception and the pre-prep where children's development is aided by the well-planned curriculum with a generous range of resources. Throughout the prep school, pupils read and write fluently, think logically and use science and mathematical knowledge effectively in different areas of learning. Pupils demonstrate exceptional levels of analysis and creative thinking. Year 6 pupils in design technology (DT) were able to evaluate board games well whilst trying to come up with improvements before being tasked to design their own.
- 3.7 As they progress into the senior school, pupils' critical thinking skills are exceptionally well developed; they synthesise information quickly and hypothesise confidently. Appropriate technical vocabulary and sophisticated methodology are used to solve problems. Pupils' mathematical and scientific understanding is particularly strong and their skills in languages and in analysing and appreciating literature are outstanding. Imaginative creative skills were seen in their colourful art displays, and they demonstrate strong talent in music and drama performances. Throughout the school, pupils display an intuitive understanding of how to apply their knowledge across all areas of learning, linking the many disciplines effectively through a range of subjects. They are particularly strong in organising themselves, planning their work and initiating new clubs and societies to further promote the love of their subjects.
- 3.8 Pupils exhibit outstanding communication skills and are able to express their ideas confidently and clearly. Pupils are proficient writers from a young age. In Early Years, children can write and pronounce their letters. In the prep school, literacy levels are exceptional with pupils using figurative language, excellent adjectives and clear understanding of comprehension skills. They are articulate as a result of the many opportunities on offer, taking part and leading assemblies, house events and year group plays. Senior pupils successfully take leading parts in debating events with others and all are involved in numerous presentations as part of their classroom learning. The majority of pupils throughout the school use correct terminology at levels well beyond what is expected for their age. Pupils respond well to teaching which sets high expectations and challenges pupils to debate and further develop their answers in discussions on a wide range of topics, from ecological issues in Year 5 to algorithmic sorting of data in Year 13. In Year 7 drama, pupils respectfully listened to each other reading scripts. They spoke fluently, adding additional volume and characterisation as required. As well as using these skills highly successfully in the classroom, they are also able to transfer these skills beyond the

classroom in their extra-curricular activities and in the extensive range of pupil-led societies, such as the Afro-Caribbean society and the Eco team.

- 3.9 Pupils have excellent numeracy skills which are embedded from an early age. Prep pupils make excellent progress at an extremely mature level. Year 2 pupils worked independently to do column method subtraction and Year 5 pupils were able to use a scientific calculator to simplify fractions. Some expressed a desire for even more challenge and more independent investigation. The high take up of mathematics at A level is an indication of the value pupils place on its importance in the curriculum and its application in the wider world. They use inference, graphical analysis and interpretation of numerical data successfully across a range of subjects, notably in the sciences, geography and economics. In science, when presented with challenging problems, they are able to break these down in logical sequences with great success.
- 3.10 Pupils are highly competent users of information and communication technology (ICT) and apply their skills well across their learning. In some subjects, they use subject specific, high-quality applications with ease such as in DT, data logging in science, and software for composition in music. Pupils in Year 4 were seen to code, analyse and debug as well as record, video and photograph their work and upload it to the cloud. During lockdown, pupils of all ages further developed their use of various online platforms to support their learning and to access their work. There is, however, some inconsistency in the application of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum. Teaching makes effective use of ICT to embed learning and spark engagement but during interviews pupils regretted that their increased ICT knowledge was being under-utilised in some areas. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.11 In the prep school, pupils experience an excellent level of success in activities beyond the formal curriculum. Pupils are successful in external competitions, such as the primary mathematics challenge, art and engineering competitions. In recent external speech and drama examinations all Year 5 candidates earned distinctions. The pupils enjoy a good level of success in fixtures in football and the hockey and swim teams have experienced national success. Senior pupils have achieved highly in a range of external competitions and events including student-chaired events such as talks on dystopian fantasy, engineering research and genocide. Senior pupils have won national writing, poetry and essay competitions, national theatre awards, debating, art and language competitions. Their sporting achievement is excellent, especially in swimming and cross country up to national level. Many are county champions in athletic events. School teams succeed at the highest level in school and regional competitions.
- 3.12 Pupils thrive in their musical education. Almost half of all pupils learn a musical instrument, many reaching the highest grades and pupils perform to an excellent standard in school orchestras, choirs or one of the numerous school ensembles. Some with exceptional talent have been chosen to perform in many external choirs and orchestras including national youth orchestras and choirs, as well as local community groups supported by the school, such as the South London Youth Orchestra. The range of extra-curricular opportunities has been greatly enhanced by the excellent facilities and resources provided by a forward-thinking governing body and leadership team.
- 3.13 The youngest pupils in the senior school enjoy discovering how to learn in study skills lessons. They display a good understanding of how to research effectively when using traditional reference works and digital media to enhance their understanding and knowledge. Senior pupils develop exceptional study skills such as reflection, analysis and research. They are pro-active learners who take responsibility for their learning and collaborate exceptionally well with each other. They are comfortable with peer-to-peer feedback and accept criticism readily. Their exceptional ability to study independently reflects their excellent attitude to learning. Pupils are highly motivated, ambitious for

themselves and think it is 'cool to learn'. Many display a passion for their subjects and instil a sense of fun into their learning experiences.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 The pupils are exceptionally mature and informed young people who have taken full advantage of the many opportunities provided by a forward-thinking school. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence and self-awareness from a young age. They are mindful of their strengths and weaknesses and are motivated and ambitious to improve themselves as they go through the school, constantly looking for ways to challenge themselves. A large majority of parents in the responses to the questionnaire agreed that the school helped their child to be confident and independent. The pupils interviewed were respectful and kind, displaying a responsible and helpful manner. They are happy to be an individual and promote those with different ideas and opinions, displaying an intellectual maturity regarding equality in their diverse community. The positive relationships pupils have with their teachers and the learning focused ethos of the school ensure pupils are open and reflective, are not afraid to fail and keen to investigate new experiences.
- 3.16 Pupils are given a great deal of autonomy within the school and decision making is natural for them. The youngest pupils are encouraged to think independently and take decisions through child-centred play and activities. In the prep, pupils are able to take decisions based on interactions with others and their understanding of codes of behaviour. During a Year 3 religious education lesson, they sensibly discussed possible additions to the Golden Rules and how these would affect pupil decision making. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed the opinion that the school does not always listen to them or respond to their views. The inspection found the school very responsive to the requests of pupils including those from the school council. Initiatives from pupils have resulted in a catering review, the introduction of a well-being pod, extended supervision in the library to enable greater flexibility of study for Years 10 to 13 and the chance to help in the design of the playground. When pupils did not always receive feedback to their suggestions, it was found to be for reasons of confidentiality, for example, when sanctions were applied. Pupils become effective decision-makers and take ownership of their learning and progress. As part of the skills for life programme in the sixth form, pupils choose to complete a range of online courses, including MOOCs (massive open online courses). A wide range of courses are chosen by the pupils tailored to their own interests, including understanding addiction, medicine and the arts and Quakerism. These provide both an additional element in university application and additional breadth to pupils' studies. The majority of pupils interviewed felt they were well prepared for moving forward to the next stage of education and life.
- 3.17 With encouragement, pupils reflect on spiritual dimensions of human existence. Pupils speak passionately about topics such as the importance of space exploration for the future success of the human race. They reflect on their position in the world and the impact they have for example in discussing 'Eco week'. Assemblies, often led by pupils, increase their understanding of different religious perspectives on a range of topics. Pupils understand about other cultures and faiths, both through a diverse curriculum and through conversations with each other. Pupils' appreciation of non-material and spiritual aspects of life is seen in their enjoyment of creative lessons as well as through their interest in the environment and sustainability. Their experiences in music, art and drama make a considerable contribution to their sense of joy in the world.
- 3.18 Pupils are keen to show their understanding of what they feel is right and wrong in class and in conversation. Behaviour around the junior school is exemplary due to the calm climate created by staff. Senior pupils are well behaved and accept responsibility for their own behaviour, happy to admit that their own friendship issues sometimes cause problems but they are able to resolve these quickly. When unkindness, intolerance or inappropriate behaviour are evident pupils are quick to support each

other. They acknowledge that they do not always involve the school when it would be beneficial to do so. The school's revised RSE and PSHE is well designed to encourage pupils to engage in this way more easily. Leading very busy lives, pupils exhibit self-discipline and purpose as they move around the school. The school's ethos promotes the values of democracy and pupils make excellent use of ample opportunities to show democracy in action in weekly debates and when voting for numerous positions of responsibility from school leaders to sports captains. Pupils are highly reflective in their views of world issues. They display a good knowledge of British institutions and laws that influence their lives as a result of the comprehensive PSHE and life-skills curriculum.

- 3.19 Pupils show excellent social development from an early age. In the pre-prep assembly younger pupils appreciated and celebrated the success of their peers in earning a prized gold leaf for excellent work. In activities pupils willingly share and help each other. Pupils of all ages form very effective relationships within their class, and these extend to other year groups. They develop their teamwork and collaborative skills with increasing success as they get older in sport, music and drama and the organisation of the many societies. Sixth-form pupils act positively as mentors and buddies to younger pupils, organising clubs and leading activities for them, such as for languages and reading. Year 12 mentor the Year 6 students successfully. More widely, pupils involve themselves with local and national charities, raising large sums for the charities of their choice which range from local food banks to help for asylum seekers.
- 3.20 Prep pupils are extremely supportive of each other regardless of background and are encouraging and accepting of differences. From an early age the different languages represented in the school community are continually represented, such as by the singing of 'Silent Night' in six different languages. Pupils learn about wider issues and different cultures from themed days and weeks built into the school calendar such as Black History Month. Senior pupils stressed that there is a strong culture of respecting diversity across the school and they have a well-established and active LGBTQ+ group. Frank and open discussions are held when intolerance is shown to help pupils develop an appreciation for different viewpoints and to deal constructively with any prejudice they may encounter. They are proud to be a Stephen Lawrence Trust ambassador school, participating in anti-racism conferences and engaging fruitfully in partnership with a company which promotes anti-racism. Pupils have formed an 'Equity and Respect' forum run by sixth-form prefects which engages in open discussion of issues such as gender equity and respect. Discussions have culminated in a number of on-going 'Speak Up, Speak Out' sessions.
- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a physically and mentally healthy lifestyle. They make appropriate choices about a balanced diet, having a good understanding of the importance of nutrition. Pupils display an excellent understanding of online safety. They make positive choices to be active and creative in a variety of activities and see them as opportunities to relax and switch off from the busy school day. Pupils of all ages develop good understanding of mental health, for example, through acts of mindfulness before lessons begin in Year 5. The sixth form have initiated a mental health first-aiders scheme. This has been extremely popular with pupils who say they have benefitted from a trained pupil listening to them either online or face to face.

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, and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting inspector
Mr Phillip Stapelton	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Charlotte Johnston	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Henry Marshall	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Graham Bone	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Alan Cooper	Team inspector (Director of relations, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Hughes	Team inspector (Head of senior school, HMC school)
Mrs Louise North	Team inspector (Principal, HMC school)
Mr Robert Lilley	Accompanying inspector