



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Sancton Wood School

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Sancton Wood School			
DfE number	873/6009			
Early Years registration number	EY536962			
Address	Sancton Wood School 2 St Paul's Road Cambridge CB1 2EZ			
Telephone number	01223 471703			
Email address	admissions@sanctonwood.co.uk			
Principal	Mr Richard Settle			
Proprietor	Mr Aatif Hassan			
Age range	9 months to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	388			
	EYFS	58	Juniors	120
	Seniors	210		
Inspection dates	15 to 17 November 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Sancton Wood School is an independent, co-educational day school. Founded in 1976 as a junior school, it was owned and run by the original family until it was purchased in 2014 by an education group. Since the previous inspection the school was bought in 2018 and is now owned and governed by Dukes Education. The school's three sections, nursery, pre-prep and prep, and senior, are situated within walking distance on three separate sites in Cambridge.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school seeks to place pupils at the heart of everything. It aims to encourage pupils to respect themselves and the cultures and beliefs of others in their community, understanding that not everyone is the same and that everyone learns in different ways. It seeks to develop skilled learners who have the courage to challenge themselves and take risks in their learning, and to develop a love of learning so they can be lifelong learners.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come largely from families with professional or business backgrounds who live in and around Cambridge. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average when compared to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified 43 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include cognitive and emotional needs, 41 of whom receive specialist help. Three pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 84 pupils, of whom 14 receive extra help with their English. Where data used by the school identifies pupils as the most able in the school's population, the curriculum is modified to support them.

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 (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. 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, 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, 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 GCSE results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils in the senior school to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard 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 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.

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 and managers plan to ensure the curriculum meets the age, needs and developmental stages of the children in the setting. Staff are aware of the various needs of the children and plan activities to engage, support and extend their learning. Children's progress is carefully monitored and tracked. Curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the provision. This ensures that all children make excellent progress relative to their starting points and are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- 3.3 Due to the high levels of care that the setting provides, the personal and emotional development of the children is excellent and they consistently demonstrate that they feel safe, secure and happy. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements, and they diligently fulfil their responsibility to protect children in their care.
- 3.4 Leaders and managers have an excellent knowledge of the EYFS learning requirements. There is ample evidence of their strong commitment to continuous improvement through detailed audits and a clear vision for the future. This ensures that all children receive exceptional support and care.

Quality of education

- 3.5 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 3.6 The curriculum, with its strong emphasis on outdoor learning, is extremely well balanced. It meets the relevant statutory requirements and the needs and interests of the children, enabling them to have an excellent start to their education.
- 3.7 Staff's excellent knowledge of how children learn and develop ensures that the content, sequencing and progression in the areas of learning are secured. They have consistently high expectations for the children in their care. Staff have regular opportunities to share information about each child's progress, particular interests and challenges. This information is then used to plan bespoke activities. For example, a wall display and a sand activity were set up to support a baby's interest in, and fascination with, construction vehicles.
- 3.8 Regular assessments, recorded on each child's electronic learning journal, are tracked against the expected levels of development to ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored, and their needs are effectively met. These are shared digitally with parents who are able to contribute by sharing with the setting their child's significant experiences and achievements at home.
- 3.9 The learning environment provides all children with a wealth of opportunities to choose from high-quality resources and experiences and so consolidate and deepen their knowledge and skills. For example, following a visit from a dental practitioner, children took on the role of a 'dentist', reflected on the event and broadened their experience of the wider world. Older children were able to enhance their mathematical skills during a baking activity by counting, measuring, and being introduced to the concept of weighing.
- 3.10 Staff readily use praise and encouragement, and this helpful feedback enables children to gain the skills they need to learn. The stimulating experiences that the children receive provide them with a solid foundation on which their future learning can be built. All children from the earliest age are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 3.11 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.

- 3.12 Children demonstrate a high level of engagement enabling them to be successful learners. They explore indoors and outdoors, playing with what they know and demonstrating a keen willingness to try new activities. Open-ended resources encourage and foster exploration and investigation, enabling children to demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning, confidence and independence. For example, when exploring bubbles, older children learned that by using a variety of resources they could make bubbles of different sizes, shapes and quantities.
- 3.13 Children are able to maintain their focus on activities for appropriate lengths of time. Babies showed high levels of concentration and perseverance when selecting the correct pieces that fitted together to complete a puzzle. As they access resources and activities, children have clear ideas about what they want to play with and show high levels of independence in their choices. Older children enjoy exploring natural materials including leaves, logs, conkers and holly. They use real household items in their play, playing with items that are familiar to them.
- 3.14 The children have inquisitive minds as they respond to the world around them. They showed great interest and fascination when searching for mini beasts under logs in the garden. They were able to identify them and talk about their characteristics, whilst revisiting previous learning by recalling songs and poems about them.
- 3.15 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show respect for one another. They respond well to gentle reminders from staff about how to share things and play co-operatively. The setting has a highly effective partnership with parents which successfully promotes children's attendance. Suitable procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

Personal development

- 3.16 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 3.17 The exceptional relationships that children have with adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. Each key person's secure knowledge of their children's unique needs ensures they know how to respond effectively. At sleep times children were observed being comforted by staff and gently rocked or stroked to sleep, ensuring they feel emotionally safe and secure. Parents are informed of their child's daily routines through daily online diaries and verbal feedback.
- 3.18 Staff are extremely supportive of each child's efforts and encourage them to do things for themselves and to persevere, as seen when babies ably find their own shoes and attempt to put them on. Older children dress independently for outdoors. Children take risks in various activities, such as using real tools on the work bench indoors and walking up and down the stairs throughout the day. However, opportunities that encourage children to be adventurous and take risks and challenges as they play in the outdoor area, are less evident.
- 3.19 A healthy diet is provided each day and staff ensure that food preferences and allergy needs are catered for appropriately. Regular use of the outdoor area provides ample opportunities for children to play outside in all weathers, allowing them to be physically active and develop their gross motor skills. Hygiene practices, which are followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of the children are met in an age-appropriate manner. Staff encourage children to understand the need for, and importance of, handwashing before eating and support those unable to do it independently. All staff give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they meet the requirements for safeguarding, welfare, learning and development.
- 3.20 Staff are highly effective in preparing children for life in modern Britain by enabling them to make decisions, such as choosing books to read and deciding which particular activity to explore. As they encourage them to share and take turns, children learn to respect and care for one another. Staff are excellent role models and consistently promote these values. The diversity of the community is valued and cultural events relevant to the children in the setting are celebrated. All children are offered the same experiences. British values of fairness, tolerance and kindness towards each other underpin the setting.

Leadership and management

- 3.21 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 3.22 The strong direction from the leadership team results in an enthusiastic and strong team of staff who share an ambitious vision to provide high-quality education and exemplary levels of care. They realise this through shared values, policy and practice. They consistently monitor and evaluate the standards of care and provision and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained. Leaders, managers and staff have high expectations of what children can achieve, together with a clear understanding about supporting all children so that they achieve the best outcomes.
- 3.23 Staff are well qualified and are well supported by leaders and managers. They benefit from regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals, where they are able to discuss their own well-being and development. Professional development is strong with training provided for all compulsory requirements. In addition, leaders identify other training needs through evaluation and supervision meetings. This results in a positive impact on the care and outcomes for the children.
- 3.24 Leaders know the children very well and respond quickly to the needs of all children, including those with SEND, EAL and additional needs. The setting can access internal specialist help when required, together with support from outside agencies. Thorough systems are in place to ensure that every child's needs are met.
- 3.25 The setting has strong links with parents. In interviews with inspectors, they reported that they are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care their children receive. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reveal that parents have an extremely positive view of the setting,
- 3.26 The needs of the setting are well known and understood by the school governors, who are effective in holding leaders and managers to account for the quality of care and education. They offer support and guidance and are extremely well informed about the practice and standards of the setting.
- 3.27 High priority is given by the staff to safeguarding and the implementation of all health and safety policies to ensure that children are kept safe. They fully comply with statutory duties for example under the Equality act 2010 and other duties in relation to the Prevent strategy and safer recruitment.
- 3.28 The recommendation from the previous inspection has been fully met.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendation for further improvement

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

- Enhance opportunities for children to take risks and challenges in the outdoor area.

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 excellent.

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of academic achievement.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across different areas of learning develop at a rapid rate.
- Pupils are effective and accomplished communicators.
- Pupils' development of study skills is sometimes limited by a lack of opportunity to expand upon their learning and demonstrate their broader understanding.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning, particularly in their ability to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups.

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

- The development of pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence is well developed.
- Pupils demonstrate highly developed decision-making skills.
- Pupils' moral understanding and responsibility for their own behaviour is excellent.
- Pupils' collaborative skills are particularly highly developed.
- Pupils show a deep respect for, and value of, the broad diversity of their school.

Recommendation

4.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Ensure pupils develop their higher-order thinking skills, such as curiosity and critical thinking, across the school by increasing opportunities in lessons for them to do so.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

4.5 Pupils' academic achievements are strong as a result of a nurturing approach on the part of all members of the school community. The commitment of senior leaders and the well-planned support provided by teachers, ensure pupils attain excellent results in externally standardised tests and public examinations. Pupils with SEND, EAL and the most able, attain equally good grades, often from considerably lower starting points. The vast majority of pupils gain entry to local sixth-form colleges

in Cambridge which have challenging entry requirements. Well-managed tracking, monitoring and support arrangements contribute to significant value being added to pupils' progress and academic outcomes. Pupils make excellent progress over their time in the school. Those with SEND achieve similar rates of progress, benefiting from the school's high expectations of, and belief in, all its pupils. GCSE results are indicative of this supportive approach to learning and teaching. In 2022 the vast majority of pupils achieved grades 9 to 4 and over two-fifths of results were at the highest three grades; this was lower than the 2020 and 2021 centre- and teacher-assessed grades. Data analysed show that almost all pupils achieve significantly higher GCSE grades than expected for their ability on entry. This represents rapid progress as they move through the school. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire feel their teachers are supportive, know their subjects well, and know how to help them learn.

- 4.6 The development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across different areas of learning is excellent. In the questionnaires, the vast majority of parents agreed that the range of subjects is suitable for their children. Pupils are enthusiastic about acquiring new knowledge and are skilled in their application of techniques and methods. They draw upon previous learning and can, when given opportunities to do so, demonstrate success in applying these. For example, in a religious studies lesson, pupils in Year 7 read aloud, with confidence, a challenging description of the Trinity, demonstrating excellent comprehension of key words, such as incarnate and redeemer. Pupils in Year 10 used their excellent knowledge and understanding of the distribution of stomata when comparing two different leaf surfaces in biology. Pupils in Year 10 also demonstrated highly developed creative skills in art using proportion and scale to create a particular effect, and in drama, applied well-understood techniques to enhance their performance of a set text. Junior pupils demonstrate particularly strong understanding of colour and explore a variety of artforms from a range of cultures, including graffiti and Islamic patterns. Their physical development is excellent, as seen in various sporting activities, such as a handball lesson and a football match.
- 4.7 Pupils' communication skills are highly accomplished. In particular, their speaking skills are extremely well developed. For example, pupils in Year 1 are articulate and confident when reading captions added to pictures. Pupils in Year 5 are confident speaking in front of their peers and take great pride in their achievements. This confidence is supported by teachers who value opportunities to celebrate moments of success. For example, pupils in Year 5, with a clear sense of pride, shared beautiful and sensitive poems about life. Pupils in Year 6 performed character roles in a drama lesson and confidently answered questions, using appropriate voices. In a history lesson, pupils in Year 10 considered the 1966 March Against Fear and the Mexico Olympics of 1968 and gave highly articulate explanations of which event they considered to be most significant for the Black Power Movement. These skills are developed from an early age. For example, Reception children confidently use their knowledge of sounds to read simple words and share their understanding of blending two sounds to make a new one. Pupils demonstrate respect and courtesy as they listen well to peers and teachers. Their writing skills develop rapidly from the early stages in the junior school. In Year 1, they write in full sentences using punctuation and capital letters. Pupils in Year 3 demonstrated an excellent understanding of imperative verbs, referring to them as 'bossy' as they 'tell us what to do'. Year 8 pupils are not afraid to make mistakes whilst working to develop fluency and accuracy in French and Spanish.
- 4.8 Pupils make excellent progress in numeracy. They are able to relate their understanding to solve problems in new contexts. For example, children in Reception enjoyed consolidating early mathematical skills and knowledge during a water play activity exploring capacity, and pupils in Year 1 named shapes from given clues. Pupils demonstrate well-developed mathematical skills for their age and ability such as when Year 2 pupils apply their analytical skills to comprehend and solve written mathematical problems. Pupils in Year 5 exhibit excellent knowledge of place value to solve complicated problems when multiplying and dividing multiples of 10, 100 and 1000. Pupils in Year 6 confidently explain their methods for multiplying fractions using appropriate mathematical

vocabulary. Senior pupils are able to synthesise their knowledge of geometry and algebra to solve problems relating to the sides and angles of a triangle. Pupils apply their mathematical skills across a variety of subjects. Pupils in Year 6 completed work about birthdays in French and worked out calculations using the Mayan number system. Senior pupils make predictions of population pyramids in geography to compare developed and under-developed countries. In biology, they use a variety of graphs, for example, bar graphs for components of air, and line graphs to confidently analyse the results of various enzyme experiments.

- 4.9 Pupils have well-developed ICT skills and are confident in applying these to other areas of the curriculum. Year 1 children are aware of the work of Piet Mondrian and use their ICT skills effectively to recreate his style. Pupils in Year 2 use various devices to take photographs under different light conditions and compare the results to support their understanding. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate an excellent grasp of coding, using software to create simple animations which express a deeper understanding of their poems. In the senior school, pupils make excellent use of online resources, for example in chemistry, where they choose to access videos provided by their teachers to enhance their understanding. Pupils, including those with SEND, demonstrate excellent competence in their use of applications, for example, explaining how they train a neural network to ascertain whether a film review is positive or negative.
- 4.10 Where challenging teaching creates appropriate pace and stimulus, pupils' development of study skills is excellent. However, opportunities to enhance this aspect of pupils' learning are not consistently created across year groups and subjects, and the excellent outcomes seen in some lessons is not replicated in others. Pupils in Year 3 make effective use of a range of resources on offer, including books, displays and previous learning. For example, they searched through recipe books to find samples of imperative verbs to add to their own list in preparation for instructional writing. In a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson, pupils in Year 5 successfully used summarising skills to create key points after reading letters about developing friendships. In science, pupils are able to suggest plausible predictions, carry out independent and fair testing, and make careful records of their findings. Pupils in Year 10 skilfully analysed different interpretations of source material, identifying the views within the interpretations and choosing quotes from each to support their points. Senior pupils undertaking extended projects research their subjects and tackle ambitious titles such as 'Where do black holes come from?' and 'Does trampling affect the species of butterflies in a local park?'
- 4.11 Pupils' interests beyond the classroom are encouraged across all ages. Pupils enjoy being able to choose from a rich and varied enrichment programme which they pursue on two afternoons a week. They become increasingly confident performers through their participation in the performing arts. From as young as Reception, they relish opportunities to perform to parents in annual nativity productions, as well as talent showcases, school productions, and participation in local and national singing events. Pupils speak confidently about reciting poetry in class and assemblies. The most successful public speakers compete in national competitions and enjoyed the limelight of national breakfast television. A small number of pupils gain success in nationally assessed music and drama examinations and the more able musicians demonstrate their talents further through performances in school concerts and assemblies. Senior pupils regularly achieve success in a national award recognising their GCSE achievements alongside making outstanding contributions to their school. Other successes include prizes in maths, science and sports competitions, including cross country, football, netball and rowing. Sports teams, as well as individuals, gain various successes in a range of sports, both as part of the school's fixtures list or as participants in local, regional and national competitions. In the questionnaire, most parents feel that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities but a small minority did not agree with this. Inspection evidence found a suitable range of extra-curricular activities was on offer to pupils of all ages.
- 4.12 Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning, particularly in their ability to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Younger pupils are extremely polite, kind and helpful to each other and staff,

and this enhances the learning atmosphere. This positivity continues throughout the school. Reception children, for example, are happy to work independently or with others. Prep school pupils increasingly take responsibility for organising their own learning, seeking additional help from teachers and attending extra sessions to tackle areas they find difficult. Pupils are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and to see them as valuable learning opportunities.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 4.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.14 Pupils have a highly developed sense of self and teacher strategies help the youngest children to develop an understanding of how to improve their own learning. Pupils display mature personal understanding and demonstrate confidence and preparedness for the next stage in their lives. For example, pupils reflect positively on the school's attention to detail in preparing new pupils for transition, enabling them to settle in quickly and feel part of the school. They speak proudly about creating videos to welcome new pupils. Pupils respond positively and effectively to advice on next steps in their learning. Older pupils in the prep school track their own targets both within lessons and in their mathematics and English books. This, along with teachers' supportive marking and feedback, enables pupils to be aware of where they are in their learning journeys. Through sampling a range of homework style options, senior pupils are able to understand their own learning styles and choose the one which suits them best, for example, in chemistry. Pupils are confident in the support that is provided for choices about the next stages of their careers. Year 10 pupils appreciate the opportunity to explore various careers that might suit them and feel well supported regarding their 16+ options. In the questionnaires, almost all prep school parents feel the school prepares their children for life in the senior school and that pupils receive suitable advice about choices of subjects and careers.
- 4.15 Pupils' decision-making skills are excellent. They are accustomed to making decisions about their academic development and understand the impact of these decisions. In the junior school, pupils in Year 6 make confident decisions about where to start their independent learning, for example, when choosing which level to start on when multiplying fractions in mathematics. Senior pupils choose which enrichment activities to attend, deciding whether to include an extended written project through the Higher Project Qualification in their GCSE options and how this might benefit their sixth form studies. Pupils in the senior school positively recall assemblies on healthy friendships and PSHE lessons in which they learn the importance of making the right decisions about the risk of relationships in which one person dominates.
- 4.16 Pupils have a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. For example, junior pupils joined in singing *Three Little Birds* with gusto during a choir rehearsal in enrichment time. Pupils in Year 2 study a variety of places of worship and design their own special places, some of which feature a sense of calm where 'people can think about nature in a nice garden with animals'. Junior pupils recollected special moments they shared together on a residential trip when enjoying outdoor pursuits and hot chocolate moments. Pupils demonstrate excellent awareness and appreciation of life, as shown in moving and sensitive poems written by Year 5, which highlighted the importance of living in the moment as no one could know what is around the corner. School productions offer pupils opportunities to develop in different directions to their normal experiences and peers spoke of the thrill of seeing others shine. Year 7 pupils were able to draw an excellent link between a religious studies lesson and their positive experiences of a Christingle service. In the senior school, pupils appreciate mindfulness sessions, often using sounds and videos, at the start of PSHE lessons.
- 4.17 Pupils' moral understanding is excellent. Their conduct around the school is of a consistently high standard, demonstrating courtesy and respect for others and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. Acts of kindness are celebrated in Reception by hanging leaves on a tree, and pupils in Year 4 show their appreciation by creating acts of kindness notes when others have been kind to them. Pupils recognise that rules help to keep them safe and understand that there may be consequences if

these are broken. Senior pupils have confidence that any lapses in behaviour are dealt with fairly and understand the importance of learning from their mistakes. They showed a strong sense of injustice when considering the themes of Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, for example, highlighting the lower wages earned by women in factories. Pupils appreciate the way that art can illuminate social situations; for example, they highlighted the sadness of the unstable situation in South Africa in relation to an artist they had studied. Their reflections on the content of the drama, *DNA*, revealed a sophisticated understanding of the dynamics of unhealthy relationships and the consequences for both victims and perpetrators. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour and that their children learn in a safe environment. In their response to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils did not agree with the statement that pupils are kind and respect each other or that the school treats them fairly, but this was not corroborated by inspection evidence.

- 4.18 Pupils' social development and collaborative skills are excellent. A culture of kindness and care permeates the school. Pupils highly value opportunities to work in pairs and groups, for example, junior pupils worked collaboratively to ensure their dance routine was cohesive, and pupils in Year 3 played a modified handball match where all pupils were involved enthusiastically in different roles on the court. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils successfully worked together to upcycle clothing to make outfits for a fashion show. Pupils in Year 8 demonstrated excellent teamwork when they designed and constructed a set for a school production, and pupils in Year 10 respect the roles assigned to them and confidently work together to enhance their work in drama. In the questionnaires, the vast majority of parents feel the school equips them with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.
- 4.19 Pupils relish the wide range of opportunities they have to take on positions of responsibility such as working with younger pupils, acting as guides on open days, running the eco group and being a school council representative. Pupils in Year 6 increase their self-esteem when supporting Year 1 pupils in literacy lessons to develop the younger pupils' understanding of sounds. Pupils are highly considerate towards their peers and understand they can make a positive difference to the lives of others. For example, in an ICT lesson, pupils were quick to notice when their peers were grappling with technology and promptly offered their assistance. Encouraged and supported by senior leaders, pupils take part in a wide variety of activities in the local area, such as singing Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* with other schools in a local church, reading poetry online to residents of local care homes and singing carols at Christmas; something the senior pupils chose to organise themselves. Pupils spoke passionately about their efforts to support people in Ukraine through designing eco-friendly, re-usable bags for a local supermarket. Pupils have the opportunity to join a well-being group to offer friendship to those who may be feeling lonely. Older pupils relish opportunities to raise awareness of charities, such as those addressing child poverty and green issues, by presenting assemblies and supporting fundraising initiatives.
- 4.20 Pupils show deep respect for diversity and demonstrate a strong cultural understanding. They are proud of where they come from, are accepting of one another, and are confident that all members of their school community treat each other with respect. Junior pupils spoke of their role in welcoming peers when they join the school from other places in the world. Pupils are intolerant of racism, for example, when responding to their study of the life and achievements of a significant American black explorer who was treated unfairly due to the colour of his skin. Senior pupils engage thoughtfully with a wide range of assemblies and are particularly empathetic to those with hidden disabilities. The school fulfils its aim to encourage pupils to respect themselves and the cultures and beliefs of others in their community, understanding that not everyone is the same and that everyone learns in different ways.
- 4.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy, both mentally and physically. For example, a pupil classroom display conveyed their understanding about the dangers of electricity in the home. Pupils respond responsibly to rules regarding physical boundaries and respect the

expectations placed upon them. Reception children understand the importance of physical exercise during their indoor play 'workout'. They are able to identify ways in which they can keep physically healthy through regular exercise, keeping clean, and by 'eating veggies but not too many sweets.' Pupils know how to stay safe online, for example, using a SMART acronym to remind themselves of the rules for e-safety. In a PSHE lesson pupils in Year 5 discussed the potential dangers of making friends online and being careful with personal details. In the questionnaires, almost all parents feel the school's relationships and sex education programme prepares their children effectively for life in modern society and encourages their children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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 a member of the school's governance team, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration periods. Inspectors visited 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

Mr Alexander Mitchell	Reporting inspector
Mrs Alison Hewitt	Compliance team inspector (Former head, GSA school)
Mrs Kerrie Daunter	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Dr Sara Harnett	Team inspector (Deputy head, GSA/HMC school)
Mrs Julia Shenolikar	Team inspector (Deputy head, ISA school)
Mrs Val Holloway	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of nursery and kindergarten, IAPS school)
Miss Jane Sheppard	Team inspector for early years (Head of lower school and nursery, IAPS school)