



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

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

**St Margaret's School**

**September 2022**

## Contents

<b>School's Details</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>1. Background Information</b>		<b>4</b>
About the school		4
What the school seeks to do		4
About the pupils		4
<b>2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection</b>		<b>5</b>
Preface		5
Key findings		6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided		6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils		6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors		7
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools		7
PART 6 – Provision of information		7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled		7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools		7
<b>3. Recommendation with regard to material change request</b>		<b>8</b>
Summary of findings		8
Recommendation		8
<b>4. Educational Quality Inspection</b>		<b>9</b>
Preface		9
Key findings		9
Recommendation		9
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements		9
The quality of the pupils' personal development		11
<b>5. Inspection Evidence</b>		<b>14</b>

## School's Details

<b>School</b>	St Margaret's School			
<b>DfE number</b>	919/6012			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1056228			
<b>Address</b>	St Margaret's School Merry Hill Road Bushey Hertfordshire WD23 1DT			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8416 4400			
<b>Email address</b>	schooloffice@stmargarets-school.org.uk			
<b>Head</b>	Ms Lara Péchard			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Ms Judith Fenn			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 19			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	653			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	608	<b>Boarders</b>	45
	<b>EYFS</b>	45	<b>Juniors</b>	192
	<b>Seniors</b>	352	<b>Sixth Form</b>	64
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27 to 29 September 2022			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Founded in 1749, St Margaret's School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school set in 70 acres of parkland in Bushey. The school is a registered charity, governed by a board of trustees. The school comprises a nursery and junior, senior and sixth form department. Boarding accommodation is provided in a single boarding house for pupils from the age of 11. Up to January 2022, male pupils were admitted to only the nursery, junior school and sixth form. Since September 2022, the school has become fully co-educational, though at present the majority of pupils are female. Since the previous inspection, a new head was appointed in January 2020.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a rich, holistic education, where pupils are stretched and supported, and to ensure that they develop a sense of leadership and service.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds representing diverse ethnic groups from 28 different nationalities. Most pupils live within a 15-mile radius of the school. There are five pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support in the classroom or specialist help where required. English is an additional language (EAL) for 53 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers and supplementary lessons. Data used by the school have identified 98 pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for 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, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. In addition, the standards relating to supervision and premises and accommodation are also included. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Additionally, this visit serves as a material change visit to assess the school's proposal to increase its capacity from 500 to 720 pupils.

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

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

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

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, 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 In the senior school, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the 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. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

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

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

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

## **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

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

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

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

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

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

### **3. Recommendation with regard to material change request**

#### **Summary of findings**

- 3.1 Inspectors were asked to focus on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) relating to safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, supervision, risk assessment, leadership and management and ISS parts 4 and 5.
- 3.2 Inspectors found that the school meets the standards in all of the above areas and judged that it will continue to do so if its application to increase pupil numbers is granted. The school has already taken the necessary actions required to accommodate the proposed extra numbers.

#### **Recommendation**

- 3.3 It is recommended that the material change be approved.

## 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 excellent knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the school in all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Pupils are extremely articulate, both orally and in their written work.

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

- Pupils are highly confident and resilient.
- Pupils show a strong desire to serve the school community.
- Pupils are confident to be themselves in an environment where diversity is embraced and celebrated.

### Recommendation

4.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to make rapid progress in their learning by sharing best teaching practice.

### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

4.5 By the end of Reception, with very few exceptions, children have met expected levels of development. Data provided by the school show that this rate of progress is sustained across all age ranges and ability levels in the junior school. This is corroborated by pupils' achievements in lessons and excellent progress in their written work. Pupils' attainment at A-level was high in 2022, with about half of entries graded A\* to A. This was mirrored by strong teacher- and centre-assessed results in 2020 and 2021, when around two-thirds of entries achieved one of the top grades. This was a significant improvement on 2019, when one-third of entries were graded A\* or A. During the period 2019 to 2022, pupils have shown equally high levels of attainment at GCSE, with around two-thirds of examinations achieved at one of the top grades. Over a three year period ending in 2021 over half the entries for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) have been awarded A\* or A grades. Data analysed suggest that in public examinations most pupils attain grades higher than expected for those of their ability.

- 4.6 Younger pupils rapidly develop their knowledge and understanding because the broad and rich curriculum that the school has put in place makes them excited to learn. This is complemented by an extensive co-curricular programme which ensures that all pupils are able to discover or develop their gifts and talents in a wide range of skills. Pupils with SEND and EAL make rapid progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of the outstanding specialist support they receive. The resulting impact on their confidence and attitudes to learning is marked. Data provided by the school show that boarders too make rapid progress. They cite the structure and routine that supervised study affords them as a significant factor. The work of senior pupils shows clear progression which they describe proudly and confidently in discussion. Displayed throughout the school, pupils' art and photography work testify to their exceptional creative skills. In lessons, a sense of intellectual confidence is evident. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson pupils expertly discussed how a writer had used structure to engage the reader and were able to identify and evaluate a wide range of literary devices. Pupils' scientific knowledge is strong. They confidently devise their own experiments, as seen in a Year 12 psychology lesson where they skilfully designed an observational study. Pupils are prepared to take risks in volunteering answers and were seen to grow in confidence when presented with the opportunity to undertake challenging open-ended tasks. Whilst most pupils value the support and expertise of teaching, a small minority in their questionnaire responses did not agree that most lessons are interesting. Inspectors found this to be justified in a small number of cases where lessons lacked pace and challenge, which as a result meant that pupils made less progress.
- 4.7 Throughout the school pupils are highly articulate. Eloquent and confident in discussions, they display an assurance beyond their years. This is in part derived from the way in which they are encouraged to participate in an inclusive classroom environment, as well as opportunities they have to speak and perform in public. In the EYFS, children engaged imaginatively in role play as they made drinks and pretended to look after a baby; higher up the junior school, pupils were able to speak confidently about presentations they had given as part of their independent learning projects about topics such as climate change. Pupils with SEND and EAL communicate with confidence and relish their growing ability to communicate more abstract ideas, both in discussion with adults and as they engage in public speaking and debating activities. Pupils are able to articulate their logic and explain clearly why and how they approach a problem. For example, Year 5 pupils explained the reasoning behind their method of solving a linear sequence problem with confidence and clarity. Older pupils communicate effectively and are able to provide sustained and developed responses, as seen in many examples of their written work which they discussed with inspectors. Sixth-form pupils are keen to use their voices in order to present issues that concern them to the wider community. They embrace opportunities to discuss and debate such as in the Model United Nations activity.
- 4.8 Younger pupils are keen to take part in independent research and do so successfully. When they are given the opportunity they show a strong ability to analyse information and make reasoned hypotheses. Older pupils' work indicates highly developed presentational and analytical skills and the ability to formulate balanced arguments. Examples of excellent written work arising from personal research were seen in discussions with pupils, indicating a strong ability to synthesise source material to produce structured responses to essay questions. Pupils assimilate information efficiently from a wide range of sources and are able to make connections between different areas of learning. They think critically, creatively and logically, as demonstrated in a Year 13 physics lesson where pupils successfully designed their own circular motion investigations or in a Year 11 biology lesson where pupils were able to identify the limitations of an investigation into the effect of light on photosynthesis.
- 4.9 Younger pupils are competent mathematicians and are able to use their mathematical skills in many other curriculum areas, such as converting measurements in design and technology or solving problems in their STEM lessons. They respond with great enthusiasm to mathematical challenges and are immensely proud when their answers are correct. In the senior school, pupils are highly numerate and are able to work together and individually to solve problems. For example, in a Year 7 maths lesson pupils showed an excellent understanding of the algebraic simplification process, whilst in a

Year 13 lesson pupils demonstrated strong levels of numeracy as they discussed misconceptions in hypothesis testing. Senior pupils successfully apply their knowledge of mathematics across the curriculum, for example in politics where pupils confidently used statistical analysis to explore voting trends. Pupils have an excellent grounding in mathematical skills to equip them for future life.

- 4.10 Pupils have excellent ICT skills, not least in their expert use of blended learning platforms. Younger pupils are extremely adept at using technology. They were able to show some excellent presentations that they had created, using embedded pictures and video clips, and spoke about activities they had successfully negotiated using programming and coding. In the senior school, pupils work effectively on their devices to enhance their learning, whether to research ideas, as a reference tool or in order to review past lessons to further their understanding. Some pupils display strong programming skills. For example, in a Year 11 computer studies lesson pupils built sophisticated subroutines to test the timing of various sort functions, demonstrating a high level of understanding. Pupils use effectively a range of subject specific software in which the school leadership has invested, and pupils with SEND report feeling very secure as they approach public examinations in the knowledge that they have an excellent bank of resources available to them.
- 4.11 Pupils' achievements beyond the classroom are good throughout the school. There have been notable performances in some areas, including sport, the arts and other areas of enrichment. Younger pupils benefit from specialist teaching, resulting in high levels of achievement in sport and the performing arts. In drama, pupils demonstrate strong confidence and leadership skills in writing, performing and directing their own pieces. Year 9 pupils recently rehearsed and performed *Oceanova* in collaboration with a professional theatre company, using their creative and artistic talents to construct both puppets and set and developing their puppetry skills in performance. The majority of pupils who enter LAMDA examinations receive merits or distinctions, with a similar picture for musicians sitting for external music qualifications. In sport, pupils have achieved success at under-15 level in the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) national indoor championships and two age groups recently finished in the top-three of local football leagues. Last year the under-18 swimming team qualified for the senior Hertfordshire finals and a weightlifter reached the national championships. A number of pupils represent district and county teams in hockey and swimming. Pupils have attained additional success in academic and other challenges, such as the Mathematics Olympiad and the Idea Award. They use their literacy and research skills successfully to produce *The Crown* and *1749*, two school magazines. Pupils are strongly encouraged in their pursuits outside the classroom by an active and supportive governing body who take a keen interest in pupils' welfare and achievements.
- 4.12 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Both the concept and the impact of independent learning are fully understood and easily articulated by pupils. Pupils took great pride in sharing their work with inspectors, which showed that they are enthusiastic and voracious learners who share a common desire to improve. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate great passion for their work, not least in EYFS and the junior school where they exhibit an infectious love of learning and pride in their achievements. All are ambitious and determined to give of their best, and exemplify in their attitudes that the school is successfully fulfilling its aim of stretching and supporting pupils. They are engaged, curious and keen to deepen their understanding, a consequence of the positive and secure culture the school has created where everyone's right to learn is valued and respected.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 4.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.14 From EYFS onwards children show high levels of self-understanding for their age. They are confident and mature when interacting with adults. They know how to improve their work and are not afraid to ask for help, supported by constructive assessment which gives them clear targets. Assemblies, PSHE lessons and displays around the school succeed in teaching younger pupils about being resilient so that they keep trying and are not afraid to take risks in their learning. Older pupils are self-assured,

yet modest and polite. They willingly express ideas in class and are confident in sharing their thoughts with adults. For example, during a form captain hustings session prospective candidates gave confident and insightful presentations about their qualities, whilst in a Year 7 religious studies lesson pupils displayed excellent self-knowledge as they described what it is that makes them both the same and unique. Older pupils also recognise that making mistakes is an important process in their learning and personal development. They know their own strengths and weaknesses, which they articulated maturely in discussion with inspectors as they adeptly critiqued their own work. They do not shy away from standing up for their rights if necessary, taking advantage of the many avenues open to them to make their views known. They happily step out of their comfort zone and are willing to challenge themselves, for example in sporting activities where perseverance, teamwork and enjoyment are valued as much as proficiency.

- 4.15 Pupils show an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. They recognise how the arts can add value to their lives and how their own faith and beliefs can contribute to their overall sense of wellbeing and happiness. In discussion, they showed a clear awareness of what spirituality is and are able to describe opportunities to experience the non-material aspects of life. Pupils spoke for example of moments of reflection in sixth form assemblies, the value of their relationships with each other and what the death of Queen Elizabeth had meant to them. They have the confidence and sensitivity to challenge each others' views on spirituality within a secure environment. Sixth form pupils are keen to take the lead on spiritual understanding within the school community, initiating for example a pupil-led assembly on the three Abrahamic faiths and including an atheistic point of view. Younger pupils have many opportunities to develop their spiritual lives and are accepting of different religions and cultures. This is fostered through effective PSHE and theology, philosophy and religion programmes as well as visiting speakers, parents and pupils sharing their beliefs and customs. Junior school pupils say they appreciate opportunities for meditation and mindfulness and opportunities for quiet reflection or prayer.
- 4.16 Mutual respect, kindness and inclusivity are at the heart of a school community that effectively regulates itself and where poor behaviour is rare. A very large majority of pupils agreed in the questionnaire that the school expects them to behave well and manages behaviour appropriately. Pupils have a strong sense of fairness and not only appreciate the value of kindness and politeness but practise them in their everyday lives. This is evident in the way pupils listen to each other respectfully and the way in which they speak to each other. Supported by strong and effective pastoral care, pupils demonstrate a highly developed sense of right and wrong, and when they fail to live up to their own high standards, they are prepared to learn from their mistakes. A culture, created by senior leaders, where redemption and reflection are key to effective behaviour management provides pupils with a framework they can trust. Pupils are very appreciative of the rewards that are available to them and which they are keen to access, as well as the clarity that the sanctions system affords them. Younger pupils are well behaved. They think the behaviour management strategies in place are effective and fair and that staff listen to them. Consequently they are not afraid to report bullying, confident that it will be appropriately managed.
- 4.17 Pupils' social awareness is strong. Teamwork is evident in the classroom, in co-curricular activities, in form groups and in the playground. For example, children in EYFS were eager to help in tidying up their classroom and to help each other safely negotiate challenging equipment on their first visit to the adventure playground. Relationships between the pupils are strong and supportive, but equally pupils are alert to their potential threat. In a PSHE lesson, Year 11 pupils were very clear about consent and the perils of coercive control in relationships. Pupils are extremely friendly, polite and welcoming. They listen to each others' ideas and views and enjoy solving problems together. They take opportunities to work together, as seen through their collaboration in wide-ranging clubs and societies, for example in a rehearsal when the recently established school orchestra collectively tackled the challenge of a Mozart march. Pupils' willingness to co-operate with each other does not prevent lively discussion or debate. Pupils feel comfortable to disagree with each other and voice alternative or opposing views, as seen in a lively discussion between pupils in a Year 10 English lesson

about stereotyping. Social cohesion and collaboration are a distinctive feature of the boarding house. Boarders spoke warmly of the opportunities boarding provides them to develop their social skills.

- 4.18 Pupils are highly accepting of anyone who is in any way different. Younger pupils show respect and appreciation for their own and other cultures, as evidenced by the way in which they spoke with interest about the beliefs of their peers. The community does not tolerate extreme views, and pupils are very clear that individuals have a right to be who they want to be. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures get along without any friction or tension. Differences inspire curiosity not animosity. Pupils speak of feeling valued as individuals and of being encouraged to work alongside each other. For example, in a sixth form assembly pupils spoke openly about SAGA, the LGBTQ+ society, to an understanding audience. In discussion, Year 10 pupils talked enthusiastically about 'dress from your culture day' and how that provided an opportunity for them to find out more about their friends' backgrounds. Boarders appreciate the richness that the wide diversity of pupils and staff lends to their community by teaching them curiosity and tolerance.
- 4.19 From a very young age, pupils confidently make their own decisions. Children in EYFS make thoughtful choices about describing their feelings or about play options. Junior school pupils make sensible corporate decisions about school life in collaboration with form captains and prefects. Seniors make informed choices about their subject and co-curricular options, university and career paths and how to organise their time. They appreciate the importance of keeping an open-mind and not being led by others, but taking advice and not being afraid to make the wrong decisions. They say that they feel well supported and encouraged in their decision-making by the staff because of the excellent relationships they enjoy. Year 10 pupils spoke enthusiastically about how they had been helped to choose their GCSE subjects through one-to-one mentoring, assemblies, form time discussions and the flexibility of being able to trial subjects. Sixth form pupils are ambitious for their future, but this is tempered with realism thanks to the sensitive guidance they receive as part of an effective university preparation programme.
- 4.20 Pupils show a strong sense of service, and pupil leaders are outstanding ambassadors. In this way the school very successfully fulfils its aim of developing pupils' leadership and service. They are passionate about supporting and acting as role models for younger pupils. They speak of gratitude to the school, a desire to give something back to the school community and a determination to enrich and enhance the experience of their fellow pupils, for example through a thriving and effective peer mentor system and strong school councils in both the junior and senior schools. Year 6 pupils are eager to undertake prefect roles and carry them out with pride and distinction. Pupils' desire to support others is evident throughout the school, for example the way in which older pupils helped younger pupils in chess club and food club. This sense of service extends beyond the confines of the school, for example through the significant contributions made by pupils to charitable organisations. Pupils demonstrate an excellent social awareness of those less fortunate than themselves and are prepared to do something about it, a tea party for Afghan refugees being just one of many examples of charitable work led by senior school pupils. Younger pupils are equally active in this area, for example their work in contributing to local foodbanks.
- 4.21 Pupils value the support and encouragement they are given to remain physically and mentally healthy. They thoroughly enjoy sport and opportunities for exercise and they understand the importance of a healthy diet. They make informed and mature choices about matters that affect their emotional health and are fully conversant with strategies for staying safe online. Pupils speak warmly about the strategies they are given to cope with the stresses and challenges they face and the support of vigilant and caring staff in times of difficulty.

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

### Inspectors

Mr Stephen Fox	Reporting inspector
Dr Brendan Stones	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Colin Gunning	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Conrad	Team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)
Mrs Caroline Jordan	Team inspector (Head, GSA school)