



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Sibford School

December 2021

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School's Details

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| School | Sibford School | | | |
| DfE number | 931/6005 | | | |
| Registered charity number | 1068256 | | | |
| Address | Sibford School The Hill Sibford Ferris Banbury Oxfordshire OX15 5QL | | | |
| Telephone number | 01295 781200 | | | |
| Email address | office@sibfordschool.co.uk | | | |
| Headteacher | Mr Toby Spence | | | |
| Chair of governors | Mr Jonathan Lingham | | | |
| Age range | 3 to 18 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 399 | | | |
| | Day pupils | 379 | Boarders | 20 |
| | EYFS | 12 | Juniors | 86 |
| | Seniors | 249 | Sixth Form | 52 |
| Inspection dates | 30 November to 3 December 2021 | | | |

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Sibford School is a co-educational independent day and boarding school, situated in a village near Banbury, Oxfordshire. It was founded in 1842, as a Quaker foundation. The school is overseen by a board of governors, known as the school committee. The school comprises four sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged 3 to 5 years; the junior school for pupils aged 5 to 11 years; the senior school pupils aged 11 to 16 years; and the sixth form for pupils aged 16 to 18 years. Boarding provision is available from the age of 11. Boarders are accommodated in two boarding houses, situated on the main school site.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has closed one boarding house. It has appointed a new head of EYFS, a new business manager and the two co-heads of sixth form.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. No boarders remained on site. During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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. Overseas boarders that did not return home received remote learning materials at the home of their parents or guardians.
- 1.7 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.8 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school intends that all policies and practice are underpinned by the school's Quaker ethos. It aims to create and maintain a culture in which all members of the community can be themselves. It seeks to meet the needs of all pupils and enable them to recognise their individual talents and realise their full potential. The school endeavours to provide pupils with a thirst for lifelong learning and an active concern for their immediate environment and wider community.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Most pupils come from local families representing a range of professional, business and farming backgrounds, with some boarding pupils coming from overseas. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 216 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and other conditions. Of these, 141 receive additional specialist help. Three pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for nine pupils, six of whom receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school have identified 50 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 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 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, 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.

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](#).

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

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. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.9 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 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 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 and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.12 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not always pay due regard to current statutory guidance. Although the school responds swiftly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns that are brought to its attention, the arrangements in school for listening to pupils are not always effective. A few pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel that they can speak to an adult at school if they are worried about something. In addition, several pupils who

responded to the questionnaire and talked to the inspectors said that they did not feel they could always raise or discuss concerns with adults at the school. Leaders are aware of this and are acting to improve pupils' confidence to do so.

- 2.13 The school has not always checked whether staff are subject to prohibition from teaching orders before they commence working at the school, when appropriate.
- 2.14 For the same reasons, the standard on child protection (NMS 11) is not met and represents a failure to safeguard boarders.
- 2.15 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–15, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–10, 12, 15 and 16 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding] and 8 [safeguarding of boarders], and NMS 11 [child protection] are not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that the arrangements in school for listening to pupils are effective [paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that it checks whether teaching staff are subject to prohibition from teaching orders before they commence working at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

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

- 2.16 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of 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.
- 2.17 Deficiencies in the checking of new staff for prohibition from teaching orders represent a failure to safeguard boarders.
- 2.18 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 19, 20 and 21] are met, but those in paragraph 18 and NMS 14 are not met.**

Action point 3

The school must ensure that all new staff are subject to the required suitability checks [paragraph 18(2)(f); NMS 14.1].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.21 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.

2.22 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.23 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.

2.24 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.25 The proprietor does not ensure 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. Not all the required policies and records related to boarding are maintained and effectively monitored, because of the failings in safeguarding. In particular, leaders have not yet successfully developed a school culture within which pupils feel they can speak to an adult at school if they are worried about something.

2.26 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 13 are not met.

Action point 4

The school must ensure 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 [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1, 13.3–13.5].

Action point 5

The school must ensure that leaders develop a school culture within which pupils feel they can speak to an adult at school if they are worried about something [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1, 13.3–13.5].

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

Key findings

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

- Pupils' attainment and progress from their different starting points are excellent.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop to a high level as they move through the school.
- Pupils demonstrate outstanding attitudes towards learning and achievement.
- Pupils' communication skills are advanced for their age throughout the school.

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

- Pupils demonstrate excellent self-confidence and self-understanding.
- Pupils' moral and spiritual sensibilities are very strong and they are highly respectful towards all members of the community.
- Pupils display outstanding collaborative skills and work together extremely well.
- Pupils' appreciation of diversity and equal treatment is excellent.

Recommendation

3.3 In the light of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:

- Strengthen pupils' ability to apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the range of subjects.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils' attainment and progress are excellent. A-level results from 2019 are above those nationally. In 2020, 56% of pupils whose work was assessed at A Level attained A* to B, and in 2021, 58.5% attained this. In 2019, 80% of pupils attained grades 9 to 4. In 2020, all pupils attained grades 9 to 4 at GCSE. In 2021, 95.2% of pupils attained grades 9 to 4 at GCSE. EYFS assessment data show that in 2021 all children attained or exceeded age-related expectations. The schools' own assessment data, including that relating to pupils with SEND, confirms that all groups of pupils make fast progress from their starting points. Work seen from across a wide range of subjects demonstrates mainly rapid and good progress over time. Observations confirm that all groups of pupils, including those with SEND and the most able, typically make high rates of progress during lessons. School leavers, including the most

able, are successful in gaining places at education and employment destinations of their choice. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that teaching, including any online provision, enabled their child to make progress. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils' achievement is strengthened because leaders have established effective use of assessment data to inform lesson planning and set targets and next steps in learning for pupils. The school fully meets its aim to meet the needs of all pupils and realise their full potential.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop to a high level as they move through the school. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson on shape poetry, pupils were able to analyse, compare and devise shape poems using correct grammatical terms, such as alliteration, simile and metaphor, and present their ideas extremely well. In Year 6 science, all pupils were confidently able to use the correct terminology while building a wire buzzer game composed of electric circuits. EYFS children showed excellent understanding of number and were able to challenge themselves using skills from previous learning when recognising the number of coins in a five-grid frame without counting. Year 10 pupils studying history analysed text effectively to categorise the political, social and economic impact of World War 1 on Germany. Year 12 artists confidently articulated the way that they blended and mirrored colours in their artwork. Year 7 pupils demonstrated strong understanding of chromatic scales and used specific musical terms correctly because of the high expectations and clear delivery of the teaching. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop strongly because teaching is consistently thorough and often challenges pupils further. Teachers are enthusiastic about their lessons, and this engages the pupils who display an eagerness to learn and improve. Staff convey very high expectations, provide effective feedback and make very good use of praise to celebrate pupils' effort and achievement. Teachers ensure good use of questioning tailored to the individual pupils' needs and abilities. Leaders ensure that lesson planning includes opportunities for cross-curricular links. Boarders who spoke to the inspectors said that the prep time and support in boarding helped them to achieve further academically. Other pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they learnt well by listening and working in teams and groups, and because their teachers wanted them to do well. Pupils with SEND were able to describe the benefits that they felt they derived from the learning support staff. They appreciated particularly the beneficial impact of the school's liaison with their parents, and the strategies that staff used to help them focus during lessons.
- 3.7 Pupils displayed excellent attitudes towards learning and achievement in all lessons seen. For instance, in the EYFS, children were motivated, curious and showed an excellent ability to work together in child-initiated activities, including using artificial snow to make habitats for arctic animals. Older junior school pupils demonstrated a very positive attitude to learning and were keen to join in their mathematics lesson. This was because staff established a routine which allowed pupils to lead the direction of their learning from the beginning of the lesson. Senior school pupils demonstrated outstanding engagement in their drama lesson, starting with warm-up activities where they were very willing to work collaboratively. Pupils' entirely positive attitudes are supported by enthusiastic teaching which includes careful grouping of pupils to promote constructive discussion. The school successfully meets its aim to provide pupils with a thirst for lifelong learning. While a small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that lessons were interesting, this view was not borne out by lesson observations during the inspection.
- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills are advanced for their age. In lessons seen, EYFS children competently shared knowledge and ideas using well-structured ideas and excellent vocabulary for their age. Year 10 pupils ably and confidently contributed confidently to a class discussion about feelings of separation in a poem. The chemistry books of the most able Year 8 pupils demonstrate accurate use of vocabulary typically found at GCSE level. Junior pupils were able to use age-appropriate vocabulary to add adverbs to verbs to provide effective starting points for story writing. In a French lesson, Year 9 pupils confidently responded to questions, using French vocabulary to form accurately constructed and pronounced sentences. Pupils' communication skills are honed and strengthened through the many opportunities to speak publicly in lessons, debates, drama and meetings for worship. In lessons observed, teachers effectively encouraged their pupils to contribute, challenge and share ideas.

- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate excellent mathematical ability and understanding and are able to apply their strong mathematical skills across the curriculum. For example, EYFS children's well-developed numeracy skills were demonstrated through child-initiated role play in a shop, where they added up the cost of the shopping and gave change accurately. This was because EYFS staff used mathematical language accurately and encouraged the children to work out the values for themselves. In a Year 9 music lesson, pupils could explain how sound wave frequencies doubled every octave and divided the octave into twelve equal intervals. The more able pupils explored pentatonic and hexatonic scales with understanding. Year 12 pupils applied their mathematical skills to art, as they used repeating geometric patterns as the background for their canvas work. Pupils' mathematical skills develop as a result of their being grouped into mathematics lessons that are matched to their ability, and through the challenging questions from teachers that require them to apply their mathematical skills.
- 3.10 Pupils display highly-developed study skills. For instance, in a Year 7 English lesson, pupils were able to hypothesise about how two Greek deities might speak about each other and use a range of strategies such as perspective, description and emotive language to express their ideas. The oldest pupils' extended projects featured strong evidence-based analysis, such as exploring possible reasons why modern dance can be vilified, and how the use of a white ball may have changed the nature of test cricket. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. Inspection evidence supports this view. Teachers develop pupils' capable study skills through the explanation and promotion of strategies such as 'point, evidence, explain and link'. Pupils were observed making spontaneous use of and explaining such strategies during the inspection. The oldest pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they found the use of quiet rooms for study in the sixth form very helpful.
- 3.11 Pupils display strong academic and other achievements for the size of the school. For example, pupils attain a high standard of success in professional swimming, such as individual success at national and county level. Pupils perform at an elite level at sailing, equestrian sport and triathlon. These achievements result from leaders' and governors' provision of a sports scholarship programme, which supports pupils with a mentor to discuss their training needs and highly qualified specialist staff to develop their individual talents. Pupils achieve merit and distinction in LAMDA examinations. Year 13 pupils achieved a national award in science in 2021, and pupils have won a local debating contest at county level.
- 3.12 Pupils' work demonstrates their competence in basic ICT, such as word processing and creating presentations. Some pupils demonstrated the ability to edit work using ICT. However, there is limited evidence of pupils applying their ICT skills in curriculum areas beyond computing lessons.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate excellent self-confidence and self-understanding. For example, in an English lesson about the poem *The Highwayman*, Year 6 pupils spoke with confidence and attempted to offer their own analysis of the poem even if not sure if they would be correct. Senior pupils' books include detailed self-reflection on their work this term. These reflections include meaningful comparisons to earlier work that highlight progress made and identify the pupils' own targets for the term ahead. Sixth form pupils who spoke to the inspectors articulated their recognition that practice makes perfect and that it is all right if it takes a long time to achieve something. This attitude is supported by leaders' and staff's promotion of a can-do attitude and an understanding that mistakes are part of the learning process. Senior pupils who spoke to the inspectors were very reflective about the source of their self-confidence. They said that being in different teaching groups enabled more socialising and developed confidence. They added that delivering presentations in lessons also developed their confidence. Other pupils emphasised how the school celebrated and valued the individual person and promoted a sense of belonging. This is because leaders and governors have successfully embedded an ethos that

promotes kindness and respect. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helped their child to be confident and independent. Similarly, all parents of boarders who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the boarding experience had supported their child's personal development. In addition, boarders who spoke to the inspectors said that boarding helped them feel settled and contributed to their personal development. Inspection evidence supports these views. The school fully meets its aim to create and maintain a culture in which all members of the community can be themselves.

- 3.15 Pupils' spiritual sensibilities are very strong. For instance, in a religious studies (RS) lesson, Year 3 pupils contemplated deeply how they would solve the seven-year famine for Joseph and expressed how they would feel if it happened now. Similarly, Year 5 pupils debated the virtues or otherwise of giving Christmas gifts in an intelligent manner. During a meeting for worship, older pupils self-chose and spoke passages of text relating to Quaker thought very thoughtfully. A high quality of reflection was evident in the way that other pupils responded and attended to the ideas being shared. Work seen included senior pupils' in-depth studies of Judaism. These explained, in sophisticated language and integrated biblical references, the pupils' ideas about how covenants teach humanity about the nature of God. In a Year 13 RS lesson, pupils applied sophisticated vocabulary and substantial understanding when discussing ethical theories.
- 3.16 Pupils display advanced moral development. For example, EYFS children demonstrated an excellent understanding of right and wrong during a shop role play activity, when a burglar who tried to rob the shop was taken to jail. Junior pupils who spoke to the inspectors conveyed a strong valuing of respect and equal treatment. In an RS lesson, the oldest pupils debated very maturely different ethical theories about pre-marital and extra-marital sex. They referred to utilitarian and Christian ideas, and considered the possible emotions and impact on people involved. Pupils' spiritual and moral understanding is enhanced through leaders', governors' and staff's successful promotion of the Quaker ethos and values of the school. They promote the idea of simplicity and the importance of non-material aspects of life. Staff across the entire school community consistently model the values of the school, and with the effect that pupils are very conscious of the importance of these. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors talked knowledgeably and with feeling about the values of the school and how much these affected the way they behaved towards others. In addition, pupils consistently demonstrated respectfulness to all members of the community during the inspection.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrated very strong collaborative skills and worked together extremely well in most lessons seen. For example, Year 6 pupils worked together as pairs very successfully to solve scientific problems related to circuit-building. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were excited to share their ideas about shape poems and push one another on to make further observations. Year 10 pupils of all abilities showed excellent collaboration while sharing ideas about how to solve algebraic questions and listened carefully to one another to decide on effective solutions. Year 9 pupils spoke about the teamwork needed to organise stalls at the Christmas fair, and how they had been encouraged by the teachers to learn new skills and work together. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. This view is supported by inspection evidence. Pupils' advanced collaborative skills arise from consistent expectations embedded across the school and teaching structured so that pupils are required to support one another during their tasks.
- 3.18 Pupils' appreciation of diversity and equal treatment is excellent. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors conveyed a strong acknowledgement of the rights of others to express their individuality, as encapsulated in the school slogan '*Be You, Be Sibford*'. During a discussion relating to *Black Lives Matter*, Year 9 pupils conveyed a strong understanding of how racist and discriminatory language had been used historically and was unacceptable now. Other pupils reflected extremely well about Michelle Obama's speech on the American dream and equality of opportunity. They demonstrated excellent appreciation of the importance of respecting and valuing diversity, and the role that education can play in this. Pupils' books showed sophisticated analysis of the role of women during

the world wars, focusing on the work of poet Jessie Pope and challenging gender stereotypes very articulately. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that their understanding of diversity and equal rights had been strengthened through the discussions that they experienced during personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons. Pupils representing minority faiths in the school told inspectors that they appreciated the acceptance and understanding shown to them by other pupils and felt that they could be themselves. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Inspection evidence supports this view.

- 3.19 Pupils make strong contributions to the lives of others, both in the school and wider community. For instance, older junior school pupils have written to the local council with the effect that new road markings were put in place near the school. Pupils represent and work on behalf of others in the school council and eco-group. The school council have successfully raised money for and bought a friendship bench, and have had a football pitch being marked out for breaktimes. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors talked proudly about the school's contributions to national and local charities, such as a local hospice and Children in Need, which the school council had chosen to support. Sixth form pupils support the learning of other pupils very willingly, as do Year 6 pupils, who read to EYFS children and younger pupils. Boarders spoke with enthusiasm about the way that they helped younger pupils and supported the chosen charities. The strength of pupils' contributions to others is developed by the opportunities that they have to fulfil a position of responsibility, either through school council or eco-group, or a variety of positions such as house captains, house sports captains, meeting elders, EYFS helpers in the lower parts of the school. It is also developed by leaders' and governors' *Discovery Award*, which consists of a bespoke year long programme designed to develop individual pupils' appreciation of themselves and their role in their communities, both locally and globally.
- 3.20 Pupils are confident decision makers. For example, in a PE lesson, EYFS children made careful decisions about which movements they would incorporate into their physical retelling of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Their decision-making was enhanced by staff who praised children for specific aspects of their movements that reflected care and represented caterpillar and butterfly movements well. Senior and sixth form pupils in a psychology class opted for bronze, silver or gold levels of challenge and chose these levels appropriately. Older pupils have chosen GCSE subjects carefully, with an emphasis on choosing subjects they enjoy. In interview, pupils commented that they are given opportunities to choose how they will tackle a task and at what level of difficulty. This was confirmed by lesson observations during the inspection. Older boarders who spoke to the inspectors said that their decision-making skills had been enhanced by the support they had received towards UCAS personal statements and applications, plus help with planning visits to open days at universities.
- 3.21 Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and an overwhelming majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they understand how to stay safe when online. During a PSHE lesson, pupils demonstrated much understanding of the importance of good sleep patterns. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet, as demonstrated by Year 6 pupils' menu designs and consideration of different food groups. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors confidently identified the benefits of undertaking exercise, making new friends and taking a break from social media. Other pupils talked sensibly about the importance of good mental health and how PSHE helped inform them of this. Boarders conveyed that they felt supported by house parents who attended PSHE sessions.

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 safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Mr Steven Popper | Reporting inspector |
| Mrs Loraine Cavanagh | Accompanying inspector |
| Dr Sara Harnett | Compliance team inspector (Deputy head academic, HMC and GSA school) |
| Miss Katy Morgan | Team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school) |
| Mr Julius Sidwell | Team inspector (Vice principal, HMC school) |
| Mrs Gillian Bilbo | Team inspector for boarding (Former head, GSA school) |