



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

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

**Wycombe Abbey**

**June 2021**

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### School's Details

|                                  |   |     |                   |     |
|----------------------------------|---|-----|-------------------|-----|
| <b>School</b>                    | Wycombe Abbey   |     |                   |     |
| <b>DfE number</b>                | 825/6018  |     |                   |     |
| <b>Registered charity number</b> | 310638  |     |                   |     |
| <b>Address</b>                   | Wycombe Abbey<br>Abbey Way<br>High Wycombe<br>Buckinghamshire<br>HP11 1PE |     |                   |     |
| <b>Telephone number</b>          | 01494 520381  |     |                   |     |
| <b>Email address</b>             | enquiries@wycombeabbey.com  |     |                   |     |
| <b>Headmistress</b>              | Mrs Jo Duncan   |     |                   |     |
| <b>Chair of governors</b>        | Mr Peter Warren   |     |                   |     |
| <b>Age range</b>                 | 11 to 19  |     |                   |     |
| <b>Number of pupils on roll</b>  | 644   |     |                   |     |
|                                  | <b>Day pupils</b>   | 62  | <b>Boarders</b>   | 582 |
|                                  | <b>Seniors</b>  | 447 | <b>Sixth Form</b> | 197 |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>          | 22 to 25 June 2021  |     |                   |     |

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Wycombe Abbey is an independent boarding and day school for female pupils aged between 11 and 19. It was founded in 1896 by Dame Frances Dove and is owned by the Girls' Education Company Limited, a registered charity, whose directors constitute the school's governing council. There are 11 boarding houses on the school site, including one for pupils in Year 7 and another for pupils in Year 13.
- 1.2 The current headteacher took up her post in September 2019, and chair of governors was appointed in March 2020.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school was closed, except for two weeks in June 2020 when it was open for Year 12 pupils.
- 1.4 No boarders remained on site, except for two weeks in June 2020 for Year 12 boarders.
- 1.5 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home, or with guardians in the case of overseas boarders.
- 1.9 In 2020 and 2021 public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded in 2020 and teacher-assessed grades were awarded in 2021.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.10 The school aims to pursue academic excellence, develop the talents of each pupil in creative, physical and social skills, and to encourage faith in God and service to other people. Through boarding, the school aims to provide opportunities for all pupils to maximise their potential.

### About the pupils

- 1.11 Most pupils are from professional families who live in London and South-East England. Overseas boarders come predominantly from Europe and Asia; of whom, a small minority remained at home for more than two weeks during the period from September 2020 onwards. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of pupils on entry to the school is well above the average for those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 65 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder and autism spectrum disorder, of whom 22 receive additional specialist support. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 95 pupils, 8 of whom receive additional support for their English. The curriculum is modified for the more able pupils in the school's population.

## 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. 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.](#)

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

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2018 to 2020, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2018 to 2020 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships and sex education except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. 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.
- 2.8 The standards 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

- 2.9 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 and access to a programme of activities. 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 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 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 14 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 5 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 standards 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 standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 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 standards relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

### 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. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

| <i>School name</i> | <i>National Curriculum name</i> |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| UIII               | Year 7                          |
| LIV                | Year 8                          |
| UIV                | Year 9                          |
| LV                 | Year 10                         |
| UV                 | Year 11                         |
| LVI                | Year 12                         |
| UVI                | Year 13                         |

#### Key findings

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

- Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of the curriculum and consistently achieve outstanding results in external examinations.
- Pupils excel in a wide variety of sporting, creative and academic co-curricular activities.
- Pupils' higher order thinking skills are extremely well-developed and are utilised very effectively to enhance and extend their learning.
- Pupils are highly motivated, have extremely positive attitudes to learning and are determined to make the most of all the opportunities available to them at school.

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

- Pupils have a remarkably strong sense of self-understanding and an excellent awareness of how to improve and achieve their goals.
- Pupils are naturally inclusive and demonstrate strong acceptance of those who have different backgrounds or beliefs to their own.
- Pupils form very strong friendships and demonstrate much respect and kindness to each other in their daily lives.



## Recommendation

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

- Strengthen the quality of pupils' service to the local community by encouraging a wider range of pupils to initiate such service themselves.

## 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, including those with SEND and those with EAL, make rapid progress over time, as evidenced by comprehensive assessment data. Their progress in lessons is facilitated by focused and well-resourced teaching alongside a culture where pupils are determined to make the best use of their time. Pupils' attainment at GCSE is outstanding, with almost all pupils achieving grades A\*, A, '9', '8' or '7' in the years 2017 to 2019 and in centre-assessed grades in 2020. During the years 2017 to 2019, pupils' attainment at A level has remained consistent, with at least four-fifths of pupils achieving grades at A\* or A. In centre-assessed grades in 2020, nine-tenths of pupils achieved grades A\* or A and almost half of pupils achieved A\*. As a result, pupils are extremely successful in securing places on courses at universities with highly selective entry requirements, both in the United Kingdom and overseas. This amply fulfils the school's aim to pursue academic excellence. In discussion, pupils were keen to point to the quality of teaching, the wide range of academic societies that offer enrichment beyond the curriculum and the support they receive from both teachers and boarding staff, as key contributory factors to their academic success. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents agreed that teaching enabled their child to make progress. Most parents who responded agreed that the boarding experience supports pupils' academic progress.

3.6 Pupils display excellent attitudes towards their learning, demonstrating an intrinsic motivation and determination to broaden their knowledge. For example, younger pupils spoke readily about how they followed extension links to explore different theatrical performances of *Macbeth* in order that they might gain an appreciation of different interpretations of the play. Pupils take an extremely high level of responsibility for their studies and appreciate the freedom that they are given to plan their own study time. They are keen and active learners who engage readily in both collaborative and individual work. For example, during a GCSE biology lesson, pupils collaborated spontaneously with their peers in a practical exercise studying optical illusions and more able pupils asked highly perceptive questions concerning the biological basis for astigmatism. Pupils demonstrate remarkably strong leadership in their learning as they engage in independent research, such as considering the use of artificial intelligence in surgery, and when they involve themselves in academic societies. Their attitude to study is supported by teaching that encourages pupils to believe in what they do.

3.7 Pupils make rapid progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of well-prepared teaching. They explore ideas in depth and make excellent use of concepts acquired in previous lessons. For example, A-level pupils used complex literary terms to explain and develop their arguments when discussing phrases used in *A Streetcar named Desire*, and younger pupils displayed particularly high-level practical skills when caramelising and baking a tart. In responses to pre-inspection questionnaires a very small minority of pupils did not agree that lessons are interesting. During lessons observed, pupils demonstrated high levels of engagement and were keen to learn and benefit from the opportunities available to them. For example, younger pupils demonstrated extremely high levels of curiosity as they persevered with a mathematical challenge involving painted cubes, and in a GCSE well-being lesson, pupils demonstrated an excellent ability to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of democracies and dictatorships when creating a new political system to use on Mars.

3.8 The pupils' well-developed numeracy skills are reflected in the extremely high standards achieved in GCSE and A-level examinations, in the high-quality work observed in lessons, and in extra-curricular

activities. For example, in the scrutiny of work younger pupils were extremely proficient at applying Pythagoras's theorem in mathematical problems and in developing high-level problem solving skills in preparation for the UK Maths Challenge. In discussions, pupils reported that they are extremely good at using their mathematical expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) projects, such as during the designing and testing of their own electric racing car.

- 3.9 Pupils are highly competent users of information and communication technology (ICT) and apply their ICT skills well to support their learning. For example, pupils of all ages engage constructively with teachers' feedback using an online platform, as was seen in the scrutiny of pupils' work. As they progress through the school, pupils use presentation software and conduct web-based research with ease, and quickly learn new skills. For example, sixth form pupils have developed particularly high-level skills in digital inking in Art and Design and have become extremely proficient at using Gantt charts while scheduling their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). During periods of remote learning pupils used online learning platforms extremely effectively to access lessons and to collaborate with their peers. This was driven by the initiative of school leadership to develop the use of digital technology for learning and teaching. For example, in a GCSE history lesson, pupils collaborated well online to refine and improve each other's statements about the economic recovery of the Weimar Republic. Pupils with SEND make excellent use of specific software to enhance their learning experience. This enables them to make progress in line with their peers.
- 3.10 Pupils exhibit communication skills of the highest quality and are able to express their ideas with precision and depth. They become extremely articulate as a result of the many opportunities for discussion and debate available for them in the classroom and beyond. This was evident in a sixth form Greek lesson where pupils expressed complex ideas about the writing styles of Ancient Greeks with great confidence. Pupils' love of reading is evident in their ability to write with flair and depth. In an English lesson younger pupils used imagery and descriptive detail extremely effectively in their writing, to create a tense introduction to a story about an abandoned building. Sixth form pupils displayed highly sophisticated written skills in EPQs. Pupils display outstanding listening skills, which they utilise effectively to shape their own thinking by building on ideas articulated by their peers. In all of these areas, a strong contributory factor is the commitment of the school's leadership team and the staff as a whole to give pupils every opportunity to read widely, engage in discussions, have the time and space to listen to one another and form their own ideas, to write creatively and to speak in public.
- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate outstanding thinking skills and relish the opportunity to form their own hypotheses. For example, they display an excellent understanding of how to research effectively when using a wide range of sources for their extended project work. Written work scrutinised shows pupils' sophisticated skills when structuring arguments and reaching well-supported judgements. This ability to research is supported by leaders' promotion of an environment of academic curiosity which encourages pupils to explore their interests and ideas, and by a curriculum and co-curricular programme that provides many opportunities for pupils to develop such skills. The pupils' particularly strong ability to analyse, hypothesise and synthesise is evident through tasks such as decoding new languages in lower school Latin lessons, and forming hypotheses on safe limits of alcohol consumption during pregnancy in GCSE well-being lessons.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, pupils achieve excellent standards in a vast array of co-curricular activities and pursuits. They regularly achieve decidedly strong success at county, national and international level in a variety of sports including lacrosse, netball, squash, and skiing. Pupils excel in the UK Maths Challenge, the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, the National Cyber Security Centre competition and in academic essay competitions. Other notable successes include an award of excellence at the New York Model United Nations Conference. Pupils gain strong success in external speech, drama and music examinations, and outstanding artistic achievement is evident in the quality of the artwork on display throughout the school. Pupils achieve highly in these areas partly because the timetable is carefully designed to enable pupils to participate in a wide range of activities, and boarding gives pupils

time to access these. In addition, pupils have gained considerable success in sport, music, speech and drama and academic competitions, partly because school leaders, governors and staff encourage them to pursue their interests to the highest level.

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

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils have a decidedly strong understanding of who they are and what they want to become. They show a willingness to embrace new challenges with confidence and respond to setbacks with determination. This was evident in a mathematics lesson where younger pupils showed excellent perseverance when faced with challenging open-ended problems. Such an attitude was also prevalent in discussions with GCSE pupils who had experienced setbacks during periods of remote learning, but overcame their difficulties by collaborating remotely with their peers. Pupils display excellent levels of self-confidence, readily sharing ideas and opinions. This was seen in all lessons observed during the inspection. Pupils of all ages relished contributing to discussions and conferring with their peers to enhance their learning. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how the decisions they make now will influence their own future success and well-being. In discussions, younger pupils spoke of how, by practising different approaches to learning they will be better prepared for GCSE study. Sixth form pupils articulated how the choices they have made whilst catering for themselves in the boarding house have been an excellent preparation for independent living. Pupils show especially strong levels of self-discipline. For example, in a music lesson younger pupils practised bars of music repeatedly enabling them to reach a very high standard of performance and in the scrutiny of work A-level pupils were seen to be meticulous in keeping to their EPQ schedules. Pupils were firm in their acknowledgement that the boarding experience and culture of the school create an environment where they are able to develop the skills to manage their time and to balance their activities and studies very effectively.
- 3.15 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. In interviews pupils spoke with great confidence about the issues raised by *Everyone's Invited*, and of how the ability to have open discussions in lessons has enabled them to develop a deep moral understanding of gender and rights. In the scrutiny of work, younger pupils were extremely perceptive in their consideration of the ethical imperative to always put the needs of others before one's own. Older pupils displayed considerable insight into the causes of human rights violations around the world. In discussions pupils displayed a very clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong, shown in their expression of no tolerance of any bullying. During the inspection it was seen that pupils are kind to each other, show respect to visitors and are extremely well-mannered. Through the school council pupils contribute positively to, and have a clear understanding of, systems of rules, and in the rare cases of misbehaviour pupils are keen to seek reparation. Pupils show a considerable appreciation of the non-material aspects of life through the obvious pleasure they get from their learning and the appreciation they show for the environment in which they live. They reflect deeply on their spirituality and demonstrate this through the decisions they make when considering confirmation, and their involvement in and leadership of religious and other spiritual societies in which differing perspectives are considered and valued. Pupils have an acute awareness of the benefits of finding time for personal reflection; in discussions they spoke enthusiastically about the pleasure they get from walking in the grounds and appreciating the beauty of the setting. In interviews, teachers described the profound sense of spirituality evident amongst sixth form pupils singing a hymn outside the chapel, saying that pupils had missed the shared experience of singing together inside the chapel during the pandemic.
- 3.16 Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and are aware of the need to establish a balance in all they do to stay physically and mentally healthy. Pupils have a particularly strong understanding of how to stay safe online and are keen to share this knowledge with other members of the school community. For example, older pupils who lead the computer society prepared an accessible online safety presentation which they delivered to younger pupils. Pupils have a clear

awareness of mental and emotional well-being, partly as a result of the opportunities they have for open discussions about mental health, both in well-being lessons and in the boarding house. In discussions, pupils spoke very strongly about the need to keep mentally healthy by not striving to attain perfection, and of how they practise yoga or mindfulness as a break from academic work. They recognise the importance of staying physically healthy and embrace the many opportunities to participate in curricular and extra-curricular sporting activities. For example, pupils discussed how they keep fit by using the fitness suite, joining the weekend running club or taking part in an archery activity. In the questionnaires, a small minority of pupils disagreed that the school encourages them to follow a healthy lifestyle. In discussions, pupils showed an appreciation of a healthy diet and described the healthy food options that are available at mealtimes and the availability of fresh fruit in the boarding houses.

- 3.17 Pupils are extremely good at working collaboratively to benefit others within the school community. They make a very positive contribution to the life of the school through taking on responsibilities such as prefects, leaders of societies and leadership roles in the boarding houses. In discussions, pupils expressed pride in their roles as peer listeners and academic coaches. For example, sixth form pupils gave extremely good support to pupils during a lower school mathematics lesson. Pupils display excellent teamwork skills which are particularly evident amongst sports teams, but also amongst many other group activities including concerts, drama productions, working collaboratively to solve academic challenges and planning Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme expeditions. For example, pupils displayed highly effective collaborative skills when researching material and developing arguments in preparation for a Model United Nations Conference. In discussions pupils reported that this was facilitated by the opportunity for weekend collaboration in the boarding house. Pupils demonstrate an extremely strong desire to make life better for others by raising money in school for charities, such as when pupils responded to *Everyone's Invited* by supporting a charity for rape victims. There is a strong understanding amongst pupils that community service is important, and they are very willing to support community events, particularly within the boarding community. However, relatively few pupils initiate and engage with opportunities for service within the community beyond the school gate.
- 3.18 Pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors passionately voiced the belief that their school is a community built on kindness, consideration, and respect; where pupils are mindful of the right of others to hold different opinions to their own. Pupils are very willing to help each other. For example, in a GCSE biology lesson pupils spontaneously collaborated with peers who were experiencing difficulties when trying to access online material for a practical exercise. In discussions, pupils said that they appreciate the mixed-age bedrooms in the boarding houses which enable them to form strong bonds with pupils in different year groups, thus promoting confidence in forming relationships throughout the whole school community. Excellent social awareness is demonstrated by boarders when they offer unprompted support to pupils younger than themselves, such as supporting them in sports fixtures and concerts. Pupils described how older members of their house are very willing to offer them advice when they are making subject choices, applying to university, or experiencing problems associated with being away from home. In interviews pupils listened attentively to each other and were keen to celebrate one another's successes.
- 3.19 Pupils demonstrate an outstanding sense of community and identity as a school and display an excellent level of respect for one another, regardless of any perceived difference. For example, pupils frequently choose to attend pupil led societies which actively explore identity or different religious beliefs. In discussions, boarders spoke of how they relish the opportunity to challenge perceptions and gain a better understanding of each other's backgrounds and cultures. This is encouraged within the non-judgemental, familial atmosphere in the boarding houses. Pupils described the very strong emotions that were evident throughout the school in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement. For example, whilst walking back to the boarding houses after a presentation about racism, pupils of all ages engaged in keen debate on challenging stereotypes and managing racist situations. In questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents said that the school actively promotes

the values of democracy, respect, and tolerance of other people, although a very small minority of pupils did not agree that pupils treat each other with respect. In interviews it was clear that pupils are very accepting of each other whilst seeking to encourage one another to understand alternative points of view. In lessons, pupils were seen to be excellent listeners who would think about and consider each other's opinions. This fulfils the school's core value, which was chosen by the pupils, of mutual respect.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, and attended chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Mrs Sue Clarke      | Reporting inspector  |
| Mrs Tracey Martin   | Accompanying inspector                                       |
| Mr Jonathan Andrews | Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)          |
| Ms Wendy Barrett    | Team inspector (Head, GSA school)                            |
| Mr Andrew Gillespie | Team inspector (Vice principal, SofH school)                 |
| Mr Warren Honey     | Team inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)                      |
| Mrs Nicola Hawkins  | Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, ISA school)        |
| Mr Philip Humphreys | Team inspector for boarding (Head of department, GSA school) |
| Mrs Louise Wilson   | Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)        |