



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

St Joseph's School

October 2018



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School's Details

School	St Joseph's School			
DfE number	892 6003			
Registered charity number	1003916			
Address	33 Derby Road Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG1 5AW			
Telephone number	0115 9418356			
Email address	office@st-josephs.nottingham.sch.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Ashley Crawshaw			
Chair of trustees	Mrs Victoria Henderson			
Age range	1 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	123			
	Boys	70	Girls	53
	EYFS	70	Main school	53
Inspection dates	2 to 4 October 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Joseph's School is an independent co-educational preparatory school for boys and girls aged between 12 months and 11 years. It is situated in the centre of Nottingham. The school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1934. Control passed to a charitable trust run by a board of trustees in 1990, before the school became fully independent in 2003 with a new board of trustees. Whilst having a Catholic heritage, the school is now predominantly mixed-faith. The current headmaster was appointed in 2015. The preparatory school comprises the Nursery for children aged from 1 to 5 and main school for pupils aged 5 to 11.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a positive, optimum environment which enables pupils to develop the skills and attitudes required to be effective lifelong learners. It has a Christian ethos which encourages pupils to love, respect and understand themselves, others and the multi-faith world in which they live. Traditional values of respect, trust, tolerance, care and hard work are promoted. The school values its warm, family atmosphere and the high level of positive interaction between all members of its community.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a wide range of social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, with parents working predominantly in business and some in professional occupations. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of the pupils is broadly average, although the spread of abilities is quite wide. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and autism, several of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 7 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 12 pupils as being the most able in its population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records 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, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

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

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

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the 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 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

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

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS PROVISION

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 2.20 Children under two make good progress relative to their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Excellent care and planning meet each child's individual needs. Children are happy, safe and secure within their nurturing, family environment, where there is a strong feeling of being part of the school. Requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met. Staff are a conscientious team who fulfil their responsibilities well and protect the children in their care. Leaders work together to evaluate their practice and improve children's learning.

EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 2.21 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good
- 2.22 Leaders have a shared vision for their setting, and staff work hard together and strive for high standards of provision and care. Robust systems ensure that every child achieves according to their needs. Regular and effective supervision of staff is firmly embedded in practice, enabling and supporting key people to improve their role with pupils and parents. Staff appraisal and peer observations identify appropriate professional development needs, and subsequent training helps to improve teaching, contributing positively to children's learning and development. Staff work together to self-evaluate and improve the quality of their setting, incorporating and acting on the views of parents where possible. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, and parents spoken to during the inspection were very happy with the caring staff and the parent partnership.
- 2.23 Children benefit from a broad curriculum. Child-initiated play, together with some adult-led activities reflecting children's interests, are incorporated into the areas of learning within the indoor and outdoor environment. Key people strongly support children according to their needs, enabling them to move to the next stage in their learning. Learning programmes meet all the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements.
- 2.24 Leaders actively promote equality and diversity. Children come from many different cultures and the wide variety of countries with which they are linked are celebrated in wall displays and regular theme days, when children sample different food and enjoy special activities. Under-twos celebrate Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year. They visit a police station, making cakes afterwards to thank them, the cathedral, and a city farm which is run by volunteers with special needs. Under-twos join whole-school assemblies, and at Remembrance Day assembly they are led around by older children to show their handmade poppies to the rest of the school. Children are confident to participate in annual Nativity plays. Positive behaviour is always celebrated and encouraged.
- 2.25 Arrangements for safeguarding procedures are robust, and staff are well trained in child protection and paediatric first aid. They understand procedures to be followed in the event of a concern. Daily risk assessments are carried out. Staff are aware of how to guard children against extremism and radicalisation.

QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- 2.26 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 2.27 Teaching supports every child, according to their need. Progress is tracked against age-appropriate developmental goals, and furthered with next steps for learning. Staff have regular meetings to help them support every child, from the more able to those needing extra help. Staff generally have a good understanding of the EYFS and how the curriculum is delivered to under-twos. Adults interact well with pupils, knowing when to question, intervene, or reinforce language. The range of activities and resources in both indoor and outdoor areas is limited and does not always promote challenge, encourage the children to investigate, or stimulate their imagination.
- 2.28 Assessment procedures are used effectively, enabling children to make good progress and achieve well. Staff make useful observations which are recorded against learning goals, and provide next steps in learning. They then plan appropriate strategies to enable all children to succeed, including those needing extra support. Learning folders are very thorough, and parents are involved in termly observations. They can contribute children's achievements at home and add their comments.
- 2.29 Staff encourage children, giving opportunities to reinforce and consolidate their learning, for example, by commentating as babies repeatedly put on and take off hats, emphasising the words 'on' and 'off', or celebrating the achievement of a toddler who has mastered the steps for the first time. Key people wear fans round their neck which display the daily routines and successfully communicate activities to children. Key people know their children well, and spend much time with individual children, encouraging their focus on a range of activities. For example, when sharing a book of textures and colours with their key person, a child was encouraged to maintain focus as they touched the different textures, repeated new words, and turned the pages independently.
- 2.30 The recommendation from the previous inspection has been implemented. Parents are now given much information about their children's progress and how they can help. They appreciate the open-door policy and the daily verbal feedback about their children's routines and activities. Excellent relationships between parents and key people are evident at drop-off time, when staff warmly welcome families and are experts at listening to worries and giving support. Staff know their pupils and their families extremely well. The noticeboard is very informative, giving a wide variety of helpful information such as weekly plans, a parents' guide to speech, stages of emotional development, and signs and symptoms of common childhood illness. The termly parent chat reinforces the parent partnership, giving opportunities for parents to understand their children's progress and comment on it.
- 2.31 Everyone is valued as an individual, for example during registration, when each child is encouraged to communicate they are present in their own particular way, and then invited to put up their photo on a display. Staff ensure they collect words that children with EAL might use in their own language; they also use songs and rhymes from their country to make them feel valued and at home.
- 2.32 Staff carefully assess when children are ready to move into the next room. They attempt to replicate some of the new activities so that children are prepared for the next stage in their learning.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE

- 2.33 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding. A calm and nurturing family atmosphere pervades the setting. Children are happily engaged in their activities, playing alongside each other. They are secure, friendly children who interact confidently with adults. Adults give them many opportunities to develop their independence within their daily routine, at snack and mealtimes and when choosing their own activities and accessing resources independently. They enjoy exploring their environment. Lunchtime and snack arrangements, around a semi-circular table, encourage social interaction and independence when eating. Children have many opportunities to develop their fine and gross motor skills. They are able to walk or crawl up and down the steps in their

room. Using apparatus and soft-ball play in the gym presents exciting new challenges, where they are able to take calculated risks.

- 2.34 Key people have a sensitive understanding of when children are emotionally and socially ready to move within the setting. This is discussed and agreed with parents, and children spend time settling into their new room before moving. Children choose their own key person and build very strong and loving bonds. They are very sociable and friendly with adults throughout the setting. Adults know just when a reassuring cuddle is needed at drop-off times. The youngest babies, new to the setting, learn that they must share the attention of their key person sometimes, and quickly adapt to being comforted by another adult. Attendance is regularly and promptly checked and recorded. Staff promote positive behaviour at all times, giving praise and guidance within the calm environment. They know when to intervene to remind children of 'gentle hands' when boisterous behaviour is evident.
- 2.35 Close staff supervision and favourable staffing ratios ensure that children are kept safe. Staff give gentle reminders about keeping safe and being healthy; babies putting unsuitable things into their mouths are quickly given something more appropriate, such as a teething ring. Staff mobile phones are locked away and photographic observations are only recorded on school equipment. Routines are well embedded in the setting. Staff make children aware of the importance of hygiene, for example when a baby drops their dummy, the key person explains: 'I'm washing your dummy because you dropped it on the floor.' Children enjoy nutritious and healthy meals and snacks. They have many opportunities to exercise, both indoors and outside, and especially benefit from using the spacious gym. Children visit the park regularly on their Friday walk and have outings to local places of interest, activity centres, and a local shop where they have the opportunity to buy things. Staff continuously prepare children to respect one another through the care and guidance they give them.

OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

- 2.36 Outcomes for children are good.
- 2.37 All children make considerable progress in relation to their different starting points. Children feel happy and secure within their calm and nurturing setting. They are confident to explore their environment and make their own choices. Toddlers persevere at their activities, for example when succeeding in opening and shutting the lid of a container and attempting to use the words 'open' and 'shut'. They learn to respect their environment as their key person gives them items to put away during the tidy-up song. Children make a tower of cars and when it collapses, they put the cars away. Older toddlers know the words of the songs and enthusiastically join in with the actions. Children learn to count the steps as they walk up them. They are aware of their own safety, for example when pulling a toy down the steps, taking a step first, looking round carefully and then pulling their toy behind them. Children draw on the computer and are very pleased with the result, for example, when creating a spider and repeating the word 'spider'. They interact together when holding hands and selecting a toy, and they learn to share their vehicles. Children show high levels of independence, knowing their routines well. For example, without adult prompting, they hand out water bottles and strap themselves into their chairs, ready for their lunch. Younger babies attempt to feed themselves using a spoon, and toddlers begin to use a knife and fork. They know when it is time to wash their hands and make a good attempt to do it thoroughly, with support from their key person. Behaviour is excellent because staff have high expectations of their pupils.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

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

- Develop a range of activities in the indoor and outdoor environment to give further challenge and encourage investigation, problem-solving, and imagination.

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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include 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>
Acorns	Reception
Chestnuts	Years 1 and 2
Hollies	Years 3 and 4
Oaks	Years 5 and 6

Key findings

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

- Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well and make good or, in some cases, rapid progress.
- Pupils display strong communication skills.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are most positive and they work well, both independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils' acquisition of knowledge and development of skills is sometimes restricted through a lack of opportunity to use their initiative and self-direct their learning.

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

- Pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge are highly developed.
- Pupils successfully meet the high behavioural expectations and standards set by their teachers.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, and make an excellent contribution to the lives of others.
- Pupils' respect for each other's differences, and the value they place on the school's cultural diversity, is exceptional.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Strengthen pupils' acquisition of knowledge and development of skills through more regular opportunities to use their initiative and self-direct their learning.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are most positive. The tasks and teaching methods employed in class encourage enthusiastic participation, and a love of learning. It is evident that pupils take pride in their work and in their school. They recognise that making mistakes is part of the learning process and extol the virtues of doing their best and trying hard. In class, pupils listen well, fully engage in the lesson, and apply themselves in a conscientious manner. They enjoy opportunities to work together but also respond well when asked to work independently. Many examples of independent work were evident in their work books, with pupils often asked to explain their views, for example, explaining what made them feel angry and suggesting ways to manage their anger. Independence is promoted through effective teaching strategies such as '1,2,3 then me' where pupils are encouraged to think for themselves first, then ask a friend before seeking help from a teacher. Pupils have some opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, such as completing drafting checklists in literacy, self-assessing a piece of work, and responding to improvement points in their written work. Their ability to use initiative, or to self-direct their learning, is restricted when teaching is too prescriptive.
- 3.6 Pupils display strong communication skills. They listen well to one another, and eagerly volunteer their views during class discussions, showing clear expression and an ability to articulate different viewpoints. These skills develop early, as seen in a conversation between two of the youngest children, who were discussing how nice it would be if all children were as willing to share as they were. Pupils' reading and writing skills are of a good standard. Pupils' work displayed throughout the school demonstrates creativity and empathy in their writing, and care is clearly taken in the presentation of their work. Pupils with SEND or EAL contribute well to class discussions, encouraged and supported by skilful teaching, and displays of their work show competency in their developing writing skills. A small minority of parents felt that the school does not listen and respond to the views of pupils. The inspection evidence does not support this view. The school's family atmosphere, and its ethos of valuing what pupils have to say, promotes open communication across the school. For example, older pupils develop confidence and skill in public speaking, through opportunities to debate the choice of location for their end-of-year trip, and to present to the rest of the school the attributes they will bring to the role of school councillor. Thoughtful planning and an emphasis on cross-curricular work ensure that many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their communication skills in all subjects.
- 3.7 The school does not enter pupils for National Curriculum tests, but available evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is above average in relation to national age-related expectations. A large majority of children in the EYFS reach levels of attainment above, or well above, those typically expected for their age. The school achieves a high level of success at the point of transfer to other schools, with scholarships being awarded to some more able pupils. Teachers have high expectations. They know their pupils well and monitor their progress effectively, making good use of this knowledge to ensure pupils of all abilities achieve well. Information on children's attainment at the end of the EYFS is now used effectively to plan future learning, so meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. Pupils with SEND or EAL achieve very well, due to the high levels of support and timely procedures for intervention. Virtually all pupils make good progress given their respective ages and abilities, and some make rapid progress. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils felt that the school helps them to learn and make progress. Most parents agreed with this, but a small minority of parents felt that their children's needs are not met effectively by the school. Inspection evidence does not support this view, as small class sizes and a high level of additional support ensure that the needs of all pupils are met appropriately. The school is successful in meeting its aim to provide a positive, optimum environment which will enable pupils to develop the skills and attitudes required to be effective lifelong learners, supported by trustees who show commitment in ensuring the school is well resourced in terms of staffing and suitable accommodation.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate proficiency in their levels of knowledge, skill and understanding across the curriculum. Specialist teaching, in subjects such as art, French and drama, has a most positive effect

on the development of pupils' skills, as seen in the varied and highly effective techniques evident in pupils' art work displayed throughout the school, and their confident and well-pronounced responses in French lessons. Literacy skills are well-developed with pupils demonstrating their ability to write well in a wide range of genres from poetry, reporting, descriptive and creative writing, to playscripts. For example, work books show older pupils demonstrating a depth of understanding as they analyse the impact of personification and the use of similes and metaphors in poetry, and those slightly younger expressing themselves clearly and persuasively as they argue opposing views on a bullying issue described in their class reader. Numerical skills develop well as pupils move through the school, supported by imaginative approaches to ensure pupils gain a secure grasp of basic numerical skills. Leadership and management have high expectations for every child, and create a learning environment where pupils' proficiency and enthusiasm for learning are fostered by stimulating teaching methods, and the considerable support offered by teaching assistants. They ensure provision for the support of pupils with SEND or EAL is of the highest order and this has a most positive effect on the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate a robust understanding of numeracy. They have a good grasp of number skills, showing ability in mental arithmetic and applying their knowledge and skills with increasing confidence in problem-solving tasks. Older pupils showed a secure understanding of equivalence as they compared fractions with unrelated denominators. They demonstrated their ability to apply their skills outside mathematics lessons, such as when creating a table in science to illustrate changes in their heart rate after sport, and representing their findings in a series of graphs. Every opportunity is taken to build strong foundations in the EYFS, as seen when children demonstrated a confident recognition of number as they played a game of dominoes. Working in groups with pupils of similar abilities, and focused support from their teachers and assistants, help to ensure all pupils develop their numeracy and mathematical skills at a rate appropriate for their abilities. More able pupils develop their problem-solving skills effectively through a range of challenging activities during a weekly mathematics enrichment lesson. Their interest and abilities in mathematics are further enhanced by participation in regional mathematics challenges, in which they have enjoyed much success.
- 3.10 Pupils have good study skills, and develop higher-order thinking skills as they move through the school. Stimulating and thought-provoking tasks, such as being asked to evaluate the effectiveness of posters from the Second World War, and to hypothesise on the movement of shadows over time, encourage pupils to think both logically and creatively. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils felt the school encourages them to think and learn for themselves and most pupils agreed that feedback on their work and marking helps them to improve. Pupils show willingness to apply their learning skills when faced with new challenges, as seen when two older pupils approached a geometry investigation into internal angles with enthusiasm. The school's promotion of its motto, 'self-belief brings lasting success', and its success in instilling in the pupils the value of trying hard, not giving up, and not being discouraged by their mistakes, has provided pupils with the confidence to embrace any challenges they face.
- 3.11 Pupils are competent in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). Weekly ICT lessons enable pupils to develop a range of skills such as word processing, use of presentation software and coding. Older pupils confidently apply these skills when carrying out, recording, and presenting their independent research. Pupils throughout the school, including those with SEND or EAL, use ICT effectively to practise and develop their mathematical skills and develop their reading and writing skills through the use of word-processing and literacy software.
- 3.12 Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular programme, which provides opportunities for them to engage and enjoy success in a wide range of activities including art, music, problem-solving, and sport. In their questionnaire responses, most parents felt that the school offers a suitable range of subjects and extra-curricular activities for their children. It has been most successful in a range of local, national, and regional competitions, such as winning a practical problem-solving competition against 15 other

independent school teams. Further successes have been enjoyed in the inter-schools' mathematics challenge and several national art competitions.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils display high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem, and this stands them in good stead as they transfer to the next phase of their education. The family atmosphere, epitomised by the mutual respect and warm relationships evident in the classroom, encourages pupils to be open in expressing their thoughts and feelings and to risk making mistakes. Pupils are keen to do well and recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. They show great maturity as they acknowledge that hard work is the route to success and appreciate the support and guidance they receive from their teachers. A clear marking policy which identifies improvement points in a piece of work, and a successful strategy which promotes effort and the value of making mistakes as a route to successful learning, help pupils develop resilience and a disciplined approach to self-improvement. Leadership and management have made self-belief fundamental to the school's approach to learning. Throughout the school, the message 'Self-belief brings lasting success' is displayed prominently and the positive impact this has on pupils was evident in discussion. Pupils commented that in school they could be the person they wanted to be, without worrying about what other people might say, clearly demonstrating that the school effectively promotes their self-confidence and self-respect.
- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate a strong awareness of right and wrong, both within and outside school, from the youngest years. The school's Christian ethos and focus on creating a caring and respectful community, together with its clear procedures for promoting good behaviour, have enhanced pupils' moral development. In their questionnaire responses, most parents agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that it expects them to behave well. Pupils understand the need for rules to have a safe and comfortable environment for all, and behaviour throughout the school is excellent. On rare occasions when pupils exhibit poor behaviour, the opportunity to reflect on their actions helps them resolve to amend their behaviour. They are highly supportive of the school's system of rewards and sanctions, displaying maturity as they discussed the positive impact rewards have on behaviour and the need for pupils to face consequences if they behave badly. Prefects and house captains are extremely good role models, and deserve the respect they receive from younger pupils as they take on roles such as staircase monitors and lunchtime helpers.
- 3.16 Pupils understand that they are responsible for making the right decisions in relation to their work and behaviour. They make sensible choices and understand the effect their decisions can have on their future success and on those around them. They recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle and are aware that the choices they make regarding exercise and diet could determine their own good health. Opportunities for decision making, such as choosing their own holiday project and suggesting clubs they would like to run, help develop pupils' initiative, and build confidence in their ability to make sensible choices. A recent initiative by older pupils has resulted in an art club run by pupils. A cookery club has begun on the instigation of pupils.
- 3.17 Pupils are proud of their school and relish their roles of responsibility, enjoying the opportunity to contribute to their school community. Older pupils are extremely good role models and are keen to support younger pupils in the school, offering help in the classroom, assisting at lunchtime, and escorting them safely to the gym at playtime. Prefects help to create an orderly environment by monitoring behaviour on the staircase at break times. Pupils recognise the importance of being a good friend, and their acceptance of each other as valued individuals within the school community is exceptional. Their care of others was most evident in discussion, as pupils expressed their appreciation of a 'buddy bench' in the playground and their willingness to befriend anyone sat there and in need of a playmate. Pupils know how fortunate they are and willingly contribute to those less fortunate, through fundraising and participation in the local community. Their efforts encompass support for many charities, and they recently showed considerable initiative in their efforts to support the local community through 'random acts of kindness'. This included singing carols in the local residential home, picking up litter, and taking cookies to the local police station.

- 3.18 Pupils show a well-developed spiritual awareness in their ability to empathise with others and to acknowledge and recognise events in the world that can make them feel both happy and sad. A display of moving war poems demonstrates a keen awareness of the horrors of war, and their enthusiastic involvement in a range of charitable fundraising events is representative of their ability to empathise with others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils appreciate the natural world around them, making efforts to support national campaigns that aim to protect endangered species. Older pupils prepared and delivered presentations to parents on the plight of rainforests, showing a keen awareness of the challenges facing the environment. Pupils' aesthetic awareness of the non-material aspects of life is evident in the high standard of art work displayed throughout the school, the success pupils enjoy in art competitions, and their enjoyment of the many opportunities to participate in music and dramatic events. Pupils develop an appreciation of a range of faiths, and a strong sense of community, as they celebrate the religious festivals of their peers and participate in assemblies and church services throughout the year.
- 3.19 Pupils' cultural understanding is exceptional. Pupils celebrate and embrace their differences, and genuinely respect and value the cultural diversity of the school. The respect for each other's differences shown by pupils is fundamental to the positive relationships which exist between pupils of all ages. Whilst pupils develop a broad knowledge of their own and other cultures as they move through the school, there is a very real sense that pupils simply do not notice their differences much of the time. Pupils do not just tolerate those from different backgrounds and traditions, they completely accept them as valued members of their school community. In their questionnaire responses, most parents and pupils agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect, and tolerance. Pupils' understanding of their own and others' cultures is developed through a range of activities such as participation in the Remembrance Day service and St Patrick's Day parade in the city centre, and presentations in assemblies and class by pupils and parents from different cultural backgrounds.
- 3.20 Pupils' social awareness is noticeably strong. They form positive relationships both within and outside the year group. School values are reinforced through assemblies and church services, as well as in displays throughout the school, and this contributes to a strong school community where pupils demonstrate consideration for, and appreciation of, others. Opportunities to work in pairs, or as a team, are provided from an early age and pupils enjoy these interactions. They clearly understand the benefits of collaboration and teamwork, and are quick to recognise each other's successes and offer help and encouragement where needed. Pupils' ability to work together leads to considerable success in a range of challenges and activities, such as participation in regional competitions, residential trips, and science and sport weeks. The school's success in helping pupils to develop strong teamwork and social skills was recognised in questionnaire responses, where a very large majority of parents and all pupils responded most positively.
- 3.21 Pupils clearly feel safe in the school environment, and have a secure knowledge of steps they need to take to keep themselves safe both within school and outside school. In discussion, pupils showed they recognise the need to achieve a sensible balance between work and play. They know how to keep themselves safe online, and how to respond to any worrying messages they receive. Displays throughout the school, and instruction given in ICT lessons and assemblies, provide pupils with guidance on measures they should take to ensure their safety. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the relationship between a good diet, exercise, and maintaining a healthy body. In their questionnaire responses, most parents and all pupils felt the school encourages them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a good range of sports and further physical challenges are provided through an annual week of sports and outdoor activities during a residential visit. Younger pupils learn how to care for their teeth, are taught to recognise a balanced diet and develop an understanding of their bodies through topic work. The school actively promotes pupils' self-confidence and mental health by offering a nurture club and mindfulness colouring group.

- 3.22 Values promoted by the school within a highly supportive and respectful community, and the dedication and care shown by school leaders and staff, contribute significantly to the outstanding personal development of the pupils and the successful fulfilment of its aims.

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 vice-chair of trustees and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, pupils and staff to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Joy Gatenby	Reporting inspector
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Coordinating inspector for EYFS
Mr Simon Worthy	Compliance inspector (director of finance and operations, HMC school)
Mrs Paula Hobbs	Team inspector (headteacher, ISA School)
Mrs Joanne Kay	Team inspector for EYFS (teacher, HMC and IAPS school)