



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Withington Girls' School

February 2022

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School's Details

School	Withington Girls' School			
DfE number	352/6033			
Registered charity number	1158226			
Address	Withington Girls' School Wellington Road Fallowfield Manchester M14 6BL			
Telephone number	0161 224 1077			
Email address	office@wgs.org			
Headmistress	Mrs Sarah Haslam			
Chair of governors	Mr Malcolm Pike			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	717			
	Juniors	156	Seniors	417
	Sixth Form	144		
Inspection dates	8 to 11 February 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Withington Girls' School is an academically selective independent day school for female pupils. It is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The school was founded in 1890 and moved to its current site in 1903. The school comprises a junior and a senior school on a single site, across which some facilities and teaching staff are shared.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all its pupils.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, teacher-assessed and centre-assessed grades were awarded.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.7 Withington Girls' School seeks to provide the highest standard of education and care for all its pupils both within and outside the classroom, together with excellent facilities for teaching and learning. Through the provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities the school endeavours to ensure that pupils develop teamwork, leadership, responsibility and service, in order to prepare them for academic success and for life beyond school. The aim is for all pupils to achieve their full potential in every sphere, and to become mature, independent learners who can face with confidence the challenges and opportunities of adult life in the 21st century.

About the pupils

- 1.8 The school population is geographically, socially, economically and ethnically diverse. Around one in six senior school pupils receives financial support through means-tested bursaries. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils on entry to the junior school is above average. National standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the senior school is well above average. In Years 12 and 13, the pupils' ability profile is above average for pupils taking A-level courses. The school has identified 60 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 40 of whom receive some additional specialist support in school. There are 127 pupils who speak English as an additional language, none of whom require additional support in school. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are given opportunities to excel. Data used by the school have identified 90 pupils in this category, and the school supports these pupils through varied learning approaches within the classroom and a programme of extension activities beyond the classroom.

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. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

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

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

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

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 and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the years 2018 to 2021, GCSE and A-level results 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 education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 In most respects 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 In isolated instances the school's procedures for checking the suitability of staff are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and do not have due regard to the government's statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. In addition to the failings identified in Part 4 below, references have not been received for all staff and some have not been checked against the barred list and the list of those prohibited from teaching.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–16, 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, but paragraph 7 [safeguarding] is not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that all required vetting checks are carried out on all newly appointed staff before commencement of employment. In particular, that references are received and checks are made against the barred list and the list of those prohibited from teaching before commencement of employment [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

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

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of supply staff and proprietors.
- 2.13 The school has not undertaken the full range of suitability checks for every member of staff before commencement of employment. The school's records show isolated instances where a criminal record certificate with barring information has not been obtained, and where there has been a failure to check that person's identity, medical fitness, right to work in the UK and qualifications.
- 2.14 A single central register (SCR) of appointments is kept as required, but not every member of staff is recorded on the SCR. There are missing entries to show when checks of a person's identity, qualifications and right to work in the UK have been made, when a criminal record certificate has been obtained and when a person has been checked against the barred list and the list of those prohibited from teaching.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 19 and 20 are met, but those in paragraphs 18 [suitability of members of staff] and 21 [single central register of appointments] are not met.

Action point 2

The school must ensure that no member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children or prohibited from teaching [paragraph 18(2)(a) and 18(2)(b)].

Action point 3

For each new member of staff, the school must carry out appropriate checks to confirm that person's identity, their medical fitness, their right to work in the UK and, where appropriate, their qualifications [paragraph 18(2)(c)(i-iv)].

Action point 4

The school must ensure that an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of every member of staff and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment [paragraph 18(2)(d)].

Action point 5

The school must ensure that all relevant checks on the suitability of staff are completed before employment [paragraph 18(3)].

Action point 6

The school must ensure that the SCR records the dates on which the following checks have been carried out on every member of staff: identity, barred list, qualifications, criminal record certificate, right to work in the UK, prohibition from teaching [paragraph 21(3)(a)(i, ii, iv, v and vii) and 21(3)(b)].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.16 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.

2.17 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.18 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.20 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.22 The proprietor has ensured that most regulatory standards for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are met.

2.23 However, on the rare occasion they have not ensured that all recruitment checks are completed before staff commence employment at the school, or that these are recorded on the SCR and in staff files. Therefore, safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures are not correctly implemented in line with current statutory guidance, and thus the welfare of pupils is not actively promoted.

2.24 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 7

The school must ensure that those with responsibility for leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all of the standards are met consistently and they actively promote the well-being of pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

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>
Transition	Year 3
Form I	Year 4
Lower II	Year 5
Upper II	Year 6

Key findings

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

- Pupils' academic achievements are outstanding, as shown by the attainment of all groups of pupils in senior school entrance and public examinations.
- Pupils of all ages display exemplary attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils' skills in mathematics are outstanding across the school.
- Pupils demonstrate and apply highly developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- Pupils' successes and achievements in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities are outstanding.

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

- Pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent self-knowledge, resilience and determination to improve their own learning and performance.
- Pupils display a strong social and moral conscience.
- Pupils in the senior school show an outstanding willingness to contribute positively to the lives of others both within school and in wider society.
- Pupils value the school's rich diversity and show excellent levels of cultural understanding.

Recommendation

3.3 The school should make the following improvement:

- Strengthen pupils' independent learning skills by increasing opportunities in lessons for them to use their initiative and be more actively involved in their learning.

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' academic achievements are outstanding, as shown by the attainment of all groups of pupils in senior school entrance and public examinations. Pupils consistently perform at an exceptionally high level, responding positively to the school's ethos of academic challenge. High expectations, knowledgeable teachers who have an in-depth understanding of the requirements of the examination specifications, and an excellent understanding of the capabilities of each individual, all contribute to pupils' success. In 2017 to 2019, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available, results at GCSE and A level were well above the national average for maintained schools. These levels of attainment have been maintained in centre-assessed and teacher-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021. This represents successful fulfilment of the school's aim to help girls of above national average ability to achieve an exceptional standard of achievement and learning.
- 3.6 Observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and examination of standardised measures of progress confirm that pupils of all ages make rapid progress in all areas of their learning. The achievement and progress of pupils with SEND is at least in line with that of their peers, as a result of the one-to-one support provided both within and outside of lessons by teachers and pupil subject mentors. In the period 2017 to 2019, the performance of EAL pupils exceeded that of their peers. The vast majority of pupils are successful in gaining places on highly competitive courses at universities with rigorous entry requirements. In discussions with pupils, they were very keen to point out the tremendous support provided by their teachers which they recognise contributes strongly to their academic success within and beyond the curriculum. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents showed their satisfaction with the teaching that their children receive, with an overwhelming majority agreeing that teaching helps their children to make progress.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent levels of subject knowledge across all areas of the curriculum, and their overall achievement is exceptional. They rapidly acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding and make excellent progress as they respond to the school's, and their own, expectations of hard work and high aspirations. This successfully meets the school's aim of encouraging every girl to acquire the skills, confidence, knowledge and experience to extend her aspirations and realise her potential.
- 3.8 Pupils throughout the school are lively and inquisitive learners with a thirst to learn more. They are confident and attentive in lessons, eagerly interpreting and demonstrating their broad subject knowledge and confidently making links across different areas of the curriculum. Whilst the focus of many lessons is on achievement in examinations, most pupils show that they are eager to extend their learning when given the freedom and opportunity to do so. This was demonstrated in geography where pupils in Year 9 provided excellent and intuitive interpretations of the advantages and disadvantages of demographic transition models. Pupils in Year 13 showed high levels of understanding in a chemistry lesson when collating and presenting graphs to explain the impact on PH levels in ethanoic acid when sodium hydroxide is added. A very small minority of pupils across the school indicated in response to the pupil questionnaire that they do not always find lessons interesting. Inspectors found that most, but not all, teaching across the junior and senior school was highly effective in engaging pupils' interest, providing a high level of challenge and resulting in excellent achievement for all pupils.
- 3.9 Pupils' communication skills are extremely well developed across the school. They are highly articulate in debate and discussion, in lessons and in all areas of school life. They employ these skills with great success when delivering presentations in assemblies, competing in debating and public speaking events, presenting their ideas to one of the school's many pupil-led committees and when speaking to inspectors. Pupils listen effectively to each other and use a wide vocabulary in their verbal and written responses. Senior pupils speak eloquently and debate challenging concepts with confidence. They reason clearly and ask perceptive questions to extend their own and others' understanding. For

example, in English, pupils in Year 9 provided passionate, balanced and informed arguments to counter the perception that Mary is a weak character in *The Crucible*.

- 3.10 Pupils' skills in mathematics are outstanding, as evidenced by their performance in national and international mathematical challenges and other external competitions, and by their exceptional results in public examinations. In the junior school, levels of numeracy are notably high. Pupils in Year 3 demonstrated excellent understanding of equivalent fractions, with some clearly ready to attempt a higher level of challenge. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated advanced skills using negative numbers and showed confident understanding of positive and negative square roots. Pupils of all ages display an infectious enthusiasm for mathematics. Engaging and challenging lessons ensure that all pupils achieve at high levels in relation to their abilities. They are motivated by the high level of challenge provided by their teachers which creates an atmosphere of numerical confidence. For example, pupils in Year 13 grappled confidently and enthusiastically with the complexities of binomial distribution. In discussions with pupils, they expressed appreciation for the support and encouragement provided by their mathematics teachers who willingly give up their time outside of lessons to help them. Pupils use their mathematical skills highly effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. Junior pupils employ their problem-solving skills in coding and, in physics, pupils in Year 8 collected and presented data with great clarity in tabular and graphical form as part of an experiment on light and shadow.
- 3.11 Pupils develop exceptionally strong and effective ICT skills which support their learning and progress across all subjects in lessons and at home. The use of personal devices is extremely well embedded throughout the school, enabling pupils of all ages to instantaneously access, retrieve and source data and information, whether externally or from their own archive of work. Pupils show excellent self-discipline in using their devices appropriately and require no direction to remain on task. The leadership's focus on training for staff in the use of digital technology and in establishing a pupil and teacher digital strategy group has been instrumental in developing pupils' high levels of skill and autonomy in using ICT. Attainment in computing is exceptionally high in the junior school and beyond. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities available to extend their knowledge, understanding and interest through a wide range of clubs and competitions such as 'Tech Club', 'Coder Dojo', 'Lego League', and the Oxford University Computing Challenge.
- 3.12 Pupils of all ages display an excellent range of study skills and exemplary attitudes to their learning. They consistently demonstrate high levels of motivation to succeed, driven by a culture of high aspirations and expectations. They eagerly and willingly embrace new learning opportunities, thriving when given the freedom to select and tackle open-ended tasks. In the junior school, pupils spoke of how much they enjoy being able to be creative in their learning, researching and presenting projects in a format of their choice, such as those completed during history week. In the senior school, pupils eagerly draw from their prior knowledge and from their own research to extend their learning when given the opportunity to do so. This was seen in geography where pupils engaged in a class discussion on population trends and influencing factors. One pupil spoke about her independent research into possible reasons why China's one-child policy did not curtail a rise in the population. Sixth-form economics pupils were able to synthesise information from different economic theories and apply this in discussions on unemployment. In a small number of lessons, pupils' freedom to use their initiative and develop their independent learning skills was limited because the teaching did not always provide sufficient opportunities for them to challenge their thinking and explore topics in greater depth.
- 3.13 Pupils show excellent organisational skills, and they develop highly effective strategies to research, analyse and hypothesise. Older pupils spoke of the satisfaction gained from selecting and researching topics for the higher-level and extended-level project qualifications and how they then used the skills learnt to support their coursework in other subjects. In design and technology, pupils in Year 11 demonstrated excellent research skills and an ability to synthesise information when investigating the work of other designers, analysing strengths and weaknesses and their effectiveness when applied to their own designs. Pupils' study skills are enhanced by school leaders' commitment to providing

dedicated time for pupils in Years 10 and 11 where they receive support on organisation, memory and revision techniques.

- 3.14 Pupils' successes and achievements in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities are outstanding. Pupils of all ages are keen to learn and benefit from the extensive opportunities provided in many subjects to extend their learning outside the classroom. They achieve exceptionally highly in a wide range of academic competitions which require them to carry out self-directed research, such as essay competitions hosted by prestigious universities. They are eager to challenge themselves, working alongside their peers from other high-performing schools, in a wide range of pursuits such as debating and public-speaking competitions, science Olympiads, engineering challenges and computer code-breaking. Older pupils play an active role in initiating new clubs and societies where they can share their interests and talents for the benefit of others.
- 3.15 Pupils' aesthetic, creative and physical skills are exceptionally well developed. Junior pupils demonstrated excellent skills in dance and gymnastics when rehearsing for a performance; senior school musicians provided an inspiring performance for junior pupils in assembly, prompting spontaneous foot tapping and singing. Pupils achieve highly in music and drama examinations and the arts award scheme. Their talents are regularly recognised with their selection for the Hallé Youth Choir, the Hallé Youth Orchestra, the National Harp Orchestra and the national Young Musician of the Year competition. Pupils' art, design and technology skills, observed in lessons and in displays around school, are outstanding. Their achievements in a wide range of individual and team sports are equally strong, with notable successes at city, county and regional level and participation at national level. The school is highly successful in meeting its aim to provide opportunities for teamwork, leadership and community service through the provision of the broadest possible range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.16 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.17 Pupils' self-understanding is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils are very self-aware, showing confident ability to analyse their academic performance and a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Pupils speak purposefully about their ambitions and recognise the need to work hard in order to achieve as highly as possible. School leaders support pupils' understanding of the need to balance high aspirations with their own well-being through the termly self-review process in the senior school and the 'What have you done today?' board in the junior school. Pupils value the opportunity this provides for self-reflection, allowing them to evaluate their academic and personal progress and to identify where any support might be needed.
- 3.18 Pupils of all ages demonstrate extremely high levels of self-discipline in lessons and also during their free time. In interviews, pupils commented that working remotely during school closure periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic had helped them to develop their independence and resilience and to be less reliant on a teacher for support. Pupils are encouraged to be decision makers at all stages of their school life, taking responsibility for their choices and learning to fully understand the impact of their decisions on their own success and well-being. In a biology lesson in Year 10, pupils discussed the process of decision making around vaccinations, showing an excellent awareness of the moral and ethical complexity of compulsory vaccinations. Senior pupils recognise and appreciate the many opportunities they have to be part of whole-school decision making, through school councils, eco council, food council and the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) group. Some junior pupils, however, commented that they do not always feel that junior council has a loud voice or a major impact. Pupils in Year 6 feel extremely well prepared for the 11+ assessment process and for the transition to senior school. Senior pupils value the support they receive from their teachers, careers department and the school's alumnae network when making decisions about their future. Sixth-form pupils commented that they feel extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives as a result

of the excellent academic grounding they have received but also in terms of the confidence, leadership and responsibility they have developed with the school's encouragement.

- 3.19 Pupils across the school demonstrate respect for, and a deep understanding of, different religious beliefs. In interviews, an overwhelming majority of pupils spoke of how much they appreciated the weekly faith and inter-faith assemblies led by sixth-form pupils, which give them space to explore their own beliefs and develop a deeper understanding of others. Older pupils display extremely high levels of maturity in their appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, demonstrated through philosophical and ethical discussions in lessons and in societies. This was seen in a religion and philosophy lesson in Year 11 where pupils debated the difference between prejudice and discrimination and in A-level art where pupils in Year 12 discussed their self-portraits reflecting their cultural and spiritual identity. Pupils have a very strong appreciation of the arts, both when creating their own work and appreciating that of others, as was shown in a music lesson in Year 8 where pupils were captivated by their teacher performing a piece of baroque music on the flute. Junior school pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their appreciation of the non-material world; further opportunities for them to explore the natural world will be provided by the development of a new outdoor classroom.
- 3.20 Pupils have a clear sense of morality and a strong sense of community which is shaped by their commitment to the school's values of 'Respect for self, respect for others and recognition of personal responsibility'. Pupils have an excellent awareness of right and wrong. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour and understand the impact their actions have on others. In discussions with pupils, they described a culture of 'positive peer pressure' where the norm is to behave well and where pupils will challenge unkindness and unfairness when they encounter it. In response to the questionnaire, pupils were unanimous in agreeing that the school expects pupils to behave well. A very small minority of pupils commented that they are not aware of sanctions for dealing with any breaches of the school's code of behaviour and they do not always feel that incidents are dealt with fairly. Scrutiny of records by inspectors shows that all incidents brought to their attention are dealt with appropriately and pupils agreed that the school's approach to educating pupils about right and wrong empowers them to make better choices in the future.
- 3.21 Pupils' social development and their ability to collaborate with others is excellent. Positive and harmonious interaction between pupils is evidenced throughout the school. Through mentoring and support mechanisms, pupils are able to form vertical as well as horizontal relationships. For example, pupils in Year 6 help those in Years 3 and 4 to improve their sporting skills through lunchtime hockey and netball clubs. Pupils of all ages appreciate the support and guidance which they receive from pupils in Year 13 in their roles as peer supporters, house captains, subject mentors and as e-peer supporters who help them navigate the risks around social media. Pupils collaborate and socialise extremely well around school and enjoy the company of others. Their excellent social awareness is evident in the ease with which they talk to and interact with adults and each other. Across all ages, pupils show natural selflessness and inclusivity, by welcoming one another into group and pair work in lessons and in social situations; they show respect and empathy for each other and exchange views and opinions respectfully.
- 3.22 Senior pupils show an outstanding willingness to contribute positively to the lives of others both within school and in wider society. They speak passionately about their desire to make a difference; they draw inspiration from school leaders' examples and commitment to embedding responsibility and service to others in all aspects of school life. Older pupils take great pride in the contribution they make to others through volunteering, supporting children with their learning in local primary schools, organising Christmas celebrations for local senior citizens, supporting community projects in The Gambia and Uganda and fundraising for local, national and international charities. Younger pupils are eager to be involved in organising events to support their chosen charities. Throughout the school, pupils enthusiastically initiate and generate projects and solutions themselves, which have an extremely positive impact on the whole school community. In the junior school, pupils contribute to

the 'Good deed feed', recognising positive examples of how their classmates have demonstrated the school's values for the benefit of all. Members of the school council have been influential in bringing about positive change through their contribution to designs for the new indoor and outdoor well-being areas and the request for dedicated prayer rooms for the different faith groups in school.

- 3.23 Pupils value the school's rich diversity and show excellent levels of cultural understanding. Across the school, pupils are genuinely welcoming and demonstrate an openness and willingness to learn about people of other nationalities, beliefs, identities and backgrounds, successfully fulfilling the school's aim to encourage respect for self and others and an awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of others. Supported by school leaders, older pupils have been proactive in raising awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion through establishing the EDI group, which is having an extremely positive impact within school and beyond. The inspectors did not find any evidence from pupils or staff to support the small minority of negative comments in the questionnaire regarding kindness and respect. Almost every pupil spoken to said that they have welcomed the opportunities provided by the EDI group and school leaders, through events such as 'Citizenship Day', 'Culture Day' and assemblies delivered by visiting speakers, which have helped to develop their understanding and awareness of diversity and inclusion. Pupils value the fact that difference is celebrated, and they feel comfortable expressing themselves freely, secure in the knowledge that they can speak out and be heard if they encounter any injustice.
- 3.24 Pupils throughout the school have an excellent understanding of the importance of staying both mentally and physically healthy. They benefit from an extremely wide range of physical opportunities, available through the broad and inclusive sports and activities programme. Pupils appreciate the positive steps taken by school leaders and governors to promote physical and mental well-being through the provision of a fitness suite, well-being studio, indoor and outdoor relaxation areas and initiatives such as the 'Feel Fab Feb Fortnight'. Sixth-form pupils value their enrichment programme which offers a choice of weekly sessions including cooking, ceramics and yoga. Pupils commented how these facilities and activities help them to balance their academic work with relaxation and encourage them to focus on their well-being. From a young age, pupils develop a strong awareness of their mental health. Teachers are highly effective in identifying any pupil who might be at risk, and pupils appreciate the support available from their teachers and the extended pastoral team. Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about how to stay safe both off and online. They are proud to have been part of developing the school's 'Digital Well-being' strategy and this is recognised by other pupils as being a very positive support in helping them to navigate the digital world safely and confidently. Senior school pupils spoke very positively about the school's willingness to respond to their feedback on topics which they felt should be included in the relationships and sex education programme. In their responses to the questionnaires, a small minority of parents and pupils commented negatively on the quality and health benefits of the school lunches. These comments were not supported by the experience of inspectors and, in discussions, all pupils agreed that their views have been listened to through the food committee and the quality and range of healthy options has improved considerably.

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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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

Mrs Valerie Dunsford	Reporting inspector
Mrs Sylvia Brett	Compliance team inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr Oliver Stokes	Team inspector (Senior deputy head, IAPS school)
Dr Toby Griffiths	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)