



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Merchant Taylors' Boys' School

May 2023

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School's Details

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| School | Merchant Taylors' Boys' School | | |
| DfE number | 343/6129 | | |
| Registered charity number | 526681 | | |
| Address | Merchant Taylors' Boys' School Liverpool Road Crosby Liverpool Merseyside L23 0QP | | |
| Telephone number | 0151 9283308 | | |
| Email address | infomtbs@merchanttaylor.com | | |
| Headteacher | Mr Deiniol Williams | | |
| Chair of governors | Mr Philip Marshall KC | | |
| Proprietor | Governors of Merchant Taylors School | | |
| Age range | 10 to 18 | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 529 | | |
| | Juniors | 37 | Sixth Form 128 |
| | Seniors | 364 | |
| Inspection dates | 10 to 12 May 2023 | | |

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Merchant Taylors' Boys' School is an independent day school for male pupils located in Crosby, north of Liverpool. It was founded in 1620 by John Harrison, a Merchant Taylor of London. It is part of a family of schools which also includes a co-educational preparatory school and a senior school for female pupils aged 11 to 18. Pupils from the two senior schools share lessons in a number of subjects. A single governing body oversees all three schools and they are led by an executive head. Since the previous inspection, the junior section of the school has become part of the preparatory school within the group. A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2019 and a new headmaster was appointed in September 2022.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a caring, nurturing and adaptable environment that is at the heart of the community. It seeks to prepare pupils for the changing world of education and work and to play a significant role in society. It aspires to foster a passion for learning, ensuring every pupil strives for excellence and reaches their potential in all aspects of their education.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional and business family backgrounds, within a very wide radius of the school. School data indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above the national average for those taking similar tests. The school has identified 147 pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional specialist help. There are two pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for ten pupils, all of whom receive additional support for their English. Pupils identified as the most able and those with particular talents have their curriculum modified or enhanced to support their individual development.

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](#).

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 In the junior school, the school’s own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the senior school, the school’s GCSE and A-level results in the years 2020 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils’ performance is in place.
- 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 The school actively promotes fundamental British values and most of the principles required by the standard through its ethos and educational provision.
- 2.8 In responding to the pupil questionnaire, a minority of pupils said that pupils are not kind and do not respect each other. Inspection evidence supports this view. Whilst pupils are able to distinguish right from wrong, a minority do not take responsibility for their behaviour due to the school’s behaviour policy not being implemented consistently by all members of staff.
- 2.9 Pupils are encouraged to respect other people in many respects. However, this is not consistently promoted with regard to the protected characteristic of sex, as set out in the 2010 Equality Act. Inspection evidence found that instances of inappropriate behaviour of a minority of pupils towards staff and their peers are not challenged with sufficient rigour to ensure the standard is met.
- 2.10 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in paragraph 5 is not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that principles are actively promoted which encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour [paragraph 5(b)(iii)].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that principles are actively promoted which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to all the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act [paragraph 5(b)(vi)].

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.11 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.

- 2.12 The school has drawn up an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. This has not been fully implemented because the school has not ensured the provision of a safe environment for all pupils. In discussion with inspectors, younger pupils stated that they do not feel safe in certain areas of the school due the ongoing inappropriate behaviour of older pupils in those areas. These concerns were found to be well-founded by inspection evidence.
- 2.13 The school has drawn up a suitable behaviour policy, and a record of serious sanctions is kept as required. In responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of pupils said that the school does not address poor behaviour and a few parents do not think that the school promotes good behaviour. Inspection evidence in lessons and around the school site supports these views. A minority of pupils continue to behave in ways which do not meet the school's expectations because the policy is not implemented consistently by all members of staff.
- 2.14 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 10–13 and 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but that those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding] and 9 [behaviour] are not met.**

Action point 3

The school must ensure that it provides a safe environment for all pupils who attend the school by responding to any concerns [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

Action point 4

The school must ensure that good pupil behaviour is promoted by effective implementation of the behaviour policy by all staff [paragraph 9(b)].

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

- 2.15 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.16 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

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.19 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.21 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.23 The school has not ensured that the leadership and management, including governance, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, in particular with regard to the effective promotion of appropriate behaviour in the school. They have not fulfilled their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they do not always actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

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

Action point 5

The school must ensure that the those with leadership and management responsibilities use their skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the 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.

Key findings

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

- All pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make strong progress in their learning throughout the school.
- Pupils are highly numerate and articulate and effective oral communicators.
- Pupils achieve significant success in a range of extra-curricular activities.
- Sixth form pupils demonstrate excellent study skills. These are less well developed lower down the school.

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

- Pupils have a strong social awareness and are highly supportive of each other's needs and achievements.
- Pupils demonstrate a high degree of sensitivity and tolerance to those from different cultures and faiths.
- Pupils work highly effectively in collaboration with one another throughout the school, when given the opportunity to do so.
- A minority of pupils do not take full responsibility for their own behaviour and actions towards others.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Improve younger pupils' ability to hypothesise, analyse and synthesise by ensuring that all receive consistent challenge in lessons to develop and use these skills.
- Ensure all pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and are effectively supported in meeting the school's expectations of their behaviour.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 The attainment levels of pupils throughout the school are high, as indicated by school assessment data and confirmed in inspection activities. They make good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of

their education. Analysis of school data shows that at GCSE most pupils attain grades in line with and often higher than expected for those of their ability. At A level, most pupils attain grades at least in line with and some significantly higher than expected for those of their ability. This is in line with the school's aim to enable their pupils to achieve their potential academically. Pupils' attainment at A level in 2022 was strong, with over one half of results at the top two grades. This high level of attainment mirrors the centre- and teacher-assessed results in 2020 and 2021. Results at GCSE are equally indicative of the good quality of teaching and learning. In 2022, just under one half of results were at the top grades, in line with the centre- and teacher-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021. Results show strong improvement beyond predictions for pupils in almost all subjects. Consequently, most leavers in 2022 gained a place at their first-choice university. Pupils with SEND make strong and, in some cases, better progress than their peers. These levels of attainment overall are enabled by effective academic leadership and teaching which demonstrates detailed knowledge of individual pupils.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are good across all subjects observed, and pupils recall basic facts with ease. Sixth form pupils demonstrate particularly high level subject skills in all branches of science. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND, show great strength in mathematics. This is due in part to the school's approach of adapting the mathematics curriculum for more able pupils, which accelerates their mathematical understanding. In Year 10 German, pupils demonstrated good oral and aural skills with strong development in their understanding of the native language. Pupils in Year 7 art displayed good progression in the development of their creative skills in their artwork. During a Year 10 design lesson, pupils worked skilfully using accuracy and dexterity to polish key fobs to a high level. Evidence from work scrutiny saw some well-developed writing skills as early as Year 6 where students wrote stories on the theme of an eerie presence. The Year 13 extended project qualification (EPQ) submissions on topics as diverse as the motivation of Pope Urban II in conceiving the first crusade were as equally persuasive in their content. In the questionnaires, a very large majority of parents agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress. A very large majority of pupils agreed that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons and that their teachers are supportive. This view is supported by inspection evidence.
- 3.7 Pupils' oral communication skills are well developed. They are confident when speaking out in lessons and when holding conversations with adults; they are articulate and use a wide range of often sophisticated vocabulary. Most pupils demonstrate strong listening skills, especially when being interviewed and in one to one discussion. However, a small minority of pupils struggled to listen effectively to their teachers in some lessons observed, which prevented them from fully engaging in the learning. In a Year 7 religious studies (RS) lesson, pupils listened thoughtfully when asked to think, pair and share their thoughts on whether people were more inclined to self-interest than to act as good Samaritans. Year 12 pupils in a Spanish lesson used the native language articulately and confidently, responding positively to the challenge of developing their skills in the class critique of a film they were analysing. When presented with opportunities in, for example, English, history and geography lessons, pupils demonstrate the ability to write longer pieces of written work that are well structured and well argued. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, read fluently and demonstrated an innate ability to accurately interpret information and instructions from textbooks and worksheets.
- 3.8 Pupils' basic numeracy skills are excellent and they can successfully apply those skills across a range of subjects, such as in science, economics, computing and design. Pupils are highly competent in mathematics, with more able pupils successfully sitting GCSE mathematics a year ahead of time, at the end of Year 10. In a Year 12 biology lesson pupils used standard form accurately when expressing the number of viable bacteria cells per cm cubed of culture. Others used straight line supply and demand graphs effectively to analyse various scenarios in an economics lesson. In Year 7 computing, pupils demonstrated confidence and good understanding of how to convert binary to denary numbers. In design, Year 10 pupils accurately sketched drawings to scale, using initial measurements to enable them to achieve perspective and a sense of scale.

- 3.9 Pupils are confident users of information and communication technology (ICT), seeing its use as a natural part of their learning which, as they recognise, developed during periods of lockdown. They are adept at using different platforms and a wide range of software in some subjects to develop their skills and understanding. Pupils of all ages talked enthusiastically about the enormous organisational benefits of ICT, for research, storing of material and notes, and checking feedback on their marked work. In discussion, Year 11 pupils explained how they had used software to compose musical pieces for their GCSE coursework which expertly used melody, bass, tempo, rhythm, dynamics and musical cadences to excellent effect. Pupils in Years 7 and 9 discussed appreciatively about the provision of personal electronic devices which helped them access class and homework resources. However, very little use of these was seen in lessons observed and scrutiny of pupils' electronic work revealed limited use of advanced ICT skills in other curriculum areas.
- 3.10 Many pupils throughout the school achieve significant success individually and in teams in sporting, musical, artistic and cultural arenas. Achievements outside the curriculum include notable success in competitions at regional and national level in mathematics challenges and Olympiads, science Olympiads, music and drama examinations, and instrumental examinations. Other areas of success include art, photography, design and creative writing competitions, at national level in some cases. Pupils are highly successful regionally in team and individual sports. Success nationally has been achieved in athletics, cricket, hockey, judo and cycle-cross and at international level in rugby and football. In discussions, pupils commented on the involvement of many pupils in the highly popular and successful school musical and drama productions in conjunction with their female counterparts in the school group. They referred to both these and participation in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), as particular strengths of the school; records of pupils' achievement in these areas support this view.
- 3.11 Pupils are highly successful in their development and use of study skills as they move up the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities successfully draw on a wide range of resources to enhance their learning, such as information gathered from the internet, library books or subject specific software. The more able pupils deftly research, analyse and synthesise data and information pertinent to particular topics. Sixth form pupils used hypothesis testing with ease as seen in a physical education lesson on the impact on an athlete's performance of a poor diet. Year 13 pupils confidently synthesised data from two natural disasters in a geography lesson and formulated a plan to reduce the impact of both. However, opportunities for younger pupils to enhance their skills of hypothesis and synthesis were less frequent in lessons observed. When teachers made use of open-ended questions, pupils were engaged and enjoyed their learning, confidently exploring their own thoughts, debating points and drawing their own conclusions. However, this was not always the case in lessons where teacher led activities became dominant.
- 3.12 Pupils show decidedly positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils across all year groups, including those with SEND, show interest, curiosity and a willingness to learn and are often eager to ask questions. They listen carefully and respectfully to their peers and their teachers. Pupils of all ages work well together when given the opportunity to do so as seen in a Year 8 science lesson, when pupils worked collaboratively within a carousel of experiments to investigate the corrosive properties of metals. Pupils demonstrated independence and initiative when questioning each other on topics such as rising sea levels in geography and the demise of the reign of Queen Elizabeth in history. A minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not agree that most lessons are interesting. Inspection evidence supports this view. In some lessons observed, a lack of pace and content progression led to pupils displaying levels of boredom which manifested itself in minor disruptive behaviour.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.14 Pupils' self-understanding is good. They show a keen understanding of the areas they excel in, the areas that they find more challenging and those they need to work on to improve their academic performance. This is particularly true of older pupils who see themselves collaborating with their teachers to achieve success. They show a clear understanding and self-awareness of their next steps in further education or otherwise and what is required of them to access these. Praise and encouragement are used throughout the school to great effect and have a clear impact on pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. These traits are manifest in the youngest pupils who, even in their short time in the school, have come to recognise their responsibility to uphold the school's values and the importance of so doing. In discussion, pupils spoke of how a variety of school activities, such as CCF and playing for sports teams, helps them to develop their resilience and to learn how to bounce back in defeat and proceed with more determination. Most pupils display good levels of self-discipline, but some do not, as evidenced in some pupil behaviour in lessons observed. A very large majority of parents in the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child be confident and independent. Inspection evidence confirms that the school's aims are successfully realised in these respects. These good outcomes in pupils' personal development are due to the commitment of senior leaders, school governors and staff to providing high levels of caring and nurturing pastoral support.
- 3.15 Pupils have well-developed decision-making skills. They appreciate that decisions they make about academic work, relationships and their own feelings will impact upon their success, development and wellbeing. Pupils show a strong interest in their future pathways, choosing to attend voluntary careers events. Support for this from the teaching staff was commented upon positively in pupil discussions. Older pupils choose to participate in wider school activities, such as subject mentoring schemes, to develop their decision-making skills and their relationships with the younger pupils. The school and eco councils make meaningful decisions about different aspects of school life, which are implemented by the school. These include improvements in the dining hall and new bins for recycling plastic waste. Good decision-making skills were also evidenced in an academic context. For example, Year 7 pupils set themselves three targets for improvement in their creative skills at the start of their project work in a design lesson. In their questionnaires, a few parents and a small minority of pupils did not agree that pupils received helpful advice about subject choices and careers. Inspection evidence from pupil discussions does not fully support this view.
- 3.16 Pupils' social skills are well developed. They enjoy opportunities to work effectively with others to solve common problems and are highly supportive of each other's achievements. This is due to the strong culture of community and expectation of collaboration which exist throughout the school, reflecting the school's aims. In the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that the school helps pupils develop teamwork and social skills and that the school equips them with the collaborative skills they need in later life. Year 7 pupils demonstrated great enthusiasm, patience, sense and sensitivity as they listened and waited their turn to take an active part in a discussion on deliberate practice. Highly co-operative and collaborative group work was observed in drama when pupils acting out their melodrama were offered constructive feedback by their peers. In their discussions, pupil leaders spoke passionately about their responsibility to be role models around the school and how they can influence younger pupils' social development in a positive way.
- 3.17 Pupils have a strong social conscience and a good awareness of their social responsibilities to others and the wider world. The school fully meets its aim to create a sense of community where pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils of all ages talk positively about the various roles for them within the school that enable them to support their peers. These include school prefects, house and sports captains, school and eco council members, charity leaders, academic peer mentors and wellbeing mentors. Pupils are highly aware of issues relating to inequality and express this most effectively through pupil-led whole-school charity work. They raise funds for charities such as care homes, hospices, international disaster initiatives and a local mental health charity. Pupils spoke

enthusiastically of their self-motivated work as hospital, charity shop and local primary school volunteers and of the difference they felt they were making. Older pupils also contribute positively to the lives of others through their involvement in the volunteering programme of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for those of other cultures. They are extremely tolerant and caring, and they show sense and sensitivity to all those within their community, irrespective of their beliefs or background. This was seen in lessons, in which pupils with EAL and SEND, are fully integrated and supported by their peers and in the varied friendship groups within the school. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of decency, respect and tolerance. Pupils take an active role with buddy schemes to support new members of the community to ensure the atmosphere is welcoming. Pupils spoke of how appreciative they were of this scheme. A group of Year 9 and Year 10 pupils discussing international relations in a lunchtime activity demonstrated strong knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the cultures that dominate governments in countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- 3.19 Pupils have a good spiritual understanding and sense of belonging. They talked openly and honestly about the positivity that they acquire from being surrounded by their friends and how this makes them happy at school. The debate and cross-fire clubs offer Year 7 pupils the opportunities to discuss spirituality and the more abstract questions about faith and beliefs, which they were seen to do so most enthusiastically. Pupils in a Year 9 RS lesson displayed thoughtfulness and empathy when discussing the challenging philosophical concept of the existence of evil and suffering alongside an all loving, all powerful, all knowing God. Year 10 pupils demonstrated a keen understanding of how the quality of the environment has been affected by the actions of humans and were extremely mindful in their discussion of ways to correct this. In discussion with the inspectors, pupils commented on how taking part in art and musical activities was extremely relaxing and a way of calming the mind.
- 3.20 Pupils' moral understanding is good and most are aware of the need to take full responsibility for their own behaviour. Most pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and a strong awareness of the need to respect the school's behaviour code and societal rules. However, this was not reflected in the behaviour of a minority of pupils in lessons and around the school site. This is because the behaviour policy is not implemented consistently by all members of staff. Older pupils demonstrated a deeply moral, spiritual and ethical understanding and awareness of collective and individual responsibility when articulately and passionately discussing the topic of 'herd immunity' vaccination in a lunchtime debate. In a Year 13 English lesson on the poetry of *Browning*, pupils displayed a strong understanding of the morality of the characters, the nature of justice, the criminal psyche and societal influences. They freely shared their ideas which were mature and well thought out. In a RS lesson, Year 7 pupils were fully engaged in discussing difficult moral issues around forgiveness and mercy, demonstrating mature thoughtfulness for pupils of that age.
- 3.21 Pupils of all ages within the school show a balanced and mature understanding of how to stay safe and how to be physically and mentally healthy in an age-appropriate way. They are aware of the need for a healthy diet and exercise and make choices that will actively support them to achieve this. All pupils throughout the school take part in regular physical activity and those interviewed commented on the enjoyment they get from it. Pupils value the opportunities in the personal, social and health education curriculum to reflect on and demonstrate their awareness of mental health issues. They were appreciative of the introduction of the wellbeing mentors and newsletter to support mental health awareness. They feel positive that they know how to access support for themselves, their peers and everyone in their school community. In discussions, pupils agreed that they know how to stay safe online and they talked about the use of outdoor and quieter spaces in and around the school as places for contemplation and reflection, taking time out from their busy daily routines.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended an assembly. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Mr Michael Evans | Reporting inspector |
| Dr Jennifer Burns | Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school) |
| Mr Bill Chadwick | Team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school) |
| Mr Stephen Hardy | Team inspector (Head of department, HMC school) |
| Ms Adrienne Richmond | Team inspector (Former head, GSA school) |