



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**FOCUSED COMPLIANCE AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION REPORTS  
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

**WORTH SCHOOL**

**NOVEMBER 2017**



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## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Worth School			
<b>DfE number</b>	938/6208			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1093914			
<b>Address</b>	Worth School Paddockhurst Road Turners Hill Crawley West Sussex RH10 4SD			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01342 710200			
<b>Email address</b>	information@worth.org.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Stuart McPherson			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Alda Andreotti			
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	595			
	<b>Boys</b>	394	<b>Girls</b>	201
	<b>Day pupils</b>	289	<b>Boarders</b>	306
	<b>Lower School</b>	76	<b>Middle School</b>	295
	<b>Sixth Form</b>	224		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21 to 23 November 2017			

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Worth School is an independent Catholic boarding and day school attached to Worth Abbey for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. The school is a charitable trust and the governors are trustees. The governing body includes both lay and monastic members and has an independent chair of governors. The school has had a lay head since 2002 and the current incumbent has been in post since 2015. Since the previous inspection there has been substantial building development which includes the new chaplaincy area, classrooms, photography and art studios and a new day house. New internal systems have been introduced to help pupils self-evaluate their achievements and the management structure has been enhanced to better reflect the wider curriculum.
- 1.2 The origins of Worth lie in the foundation in 1606 of a Benedictine community, and the school was founded on the present 500-acre site in West Sussex in 1933. The school became fully co-educational in 2012. There are five boarding and five day houses which accommodate pupils across all age groups. Each house has common recreation areas and kitchens, and all meals are taken centrally in two locations depending on year group, with an additional café style option for sixth form pupils.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The key aims of the school are rooted in the Benedictine tradition and values, in the nurturing of its community and the provision of a liberal education and a Catholic curriculum in order to support the pupils' vocational discernment. It seeks to value individuals and foster the community life of learning, worship, friendship and service, and to provide a supportive environment where every pupil is encouraged to realise their full potential.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a wide variety of independent preparatory and state schools and from a range of professional backgrounds. Over half are boarders, most coming from London and the home counties, and others from overseas. Day pupils come from within an hour's radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability profile of pupils in Year 7 is broadly average, and of pupils in Year 10 above average. The school has identified 145 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 82 of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 158 pupils, 28 of whom are supported by additional specialist teaching. Data used by the school have identified 216 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, because of their academic ability and talents in art, drama, music or sport, and specific provision is made 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. 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.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

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, including the boarding NMS, 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, including the boarding NMS.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as met or as not met. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. 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, together with the NMS covering the same areas.

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](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

## Key findings

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

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2014 to 2016, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools. At IGCSE in the years 2014 to 2016, results have been higher than worldwide norms.
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2014 to 2016 have been in line with the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools. Results in the International Baccalaureate in the years 2014 to 2016 have been higher than worldwide norms and higher than the UK average.
- 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 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.7 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

### PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.

- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

### **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.13 Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

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

### **PART 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.15 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 those 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, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

- 2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.**

### **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

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

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

### **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

- 2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

### 3. EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

#### Preface

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

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

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 descriptions 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

## Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils are highly articulate in verbal and written communication and show great pride in its presentation.
  - Pupils display high level study skills and are challenged by the expectations of their teachers.
  - Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and they recognise that the school values a positive attitude rather than pure outcomes.
  - Pupils' achievements across an abundant range of activities are outstanding.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils are mature and many exhibit a strong capacity for self-evaluation, understanding how their decision-making affects their success at school and their personal futures.
  - Pupils' courteous and caring behaviour towards others, and their sensitive spiritual awareness of the world around them reflect well their appreciation of the ethos of the Benedictine community.
  - Pupils exercise their responsibilities conscientiously, and all demonstrate a strong social awareness, enjoying collaborative initiatives and the leadership opportunities provided.
  - Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy, and how to stay safe.

## Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
- Ensure the initiatives for improving the pupils' achievement are employed more consistently across the school.

## The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school successfully fulfils its aims, which are rooted in the Benedictine tradition and values, enabling the pupils to find personal strength, success and contentment whilst on their educational and spiritual journeys. The pupils' strong achievements in both curricular and co-curricular areas are the result of a distinctive focus on the individual which is evident both in the classroom, where personal targets are set, and in the inspiring opportunities that are available in the wider curriculum. Most pupils said there was a good range of activities they could be involved in, which confirms the successful achievement of the recommendation from the previous inspection. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of boarders were less happy with the balance of free time and activities that they have in the evenings and weekends. However, in interviews boarders spoke fondly of the range available such as photography, horse riding, a variety of sporting options and the fact that they were voluntary, and inspection evidence confirms that there is a good balance.
- 3.6 Much emphasis is placed on community life at Worth, both in and outside of the classroom. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and they work well collaboratively as well as individually. They recognise that the school motivates them but also values a positive attitude rather than pure outcomes. They approach their academic work with enthusiasm and enjoy learning. Pupils relish the many opportunities they are given to collaborate in the classroom as a result of carefully planned lessons which build on their knowledge through skilled questioning and appropriate challenge. The physical learning environments aid them in this process by being both attractive, such as the geography department, and, as in English and other languages rooms, having vivid displays and

reminders of key literary and grammar terms. Outcomes for pupils are improving due to new quality assurance measures including regular work scrutiny and observations conducted by middle managers and monitored by senior leaders. These focus on pupils' learning and sharing best practice whilst individualised targets are extensively used in reporting and marking to promote an increased ownership of learning. The highly detailed and clear development plan is designed to disseminate this in all areas of the school. In the questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that teaching enables their child to make good progress and develop skills for the future and most pupils agreed that their teachers are supportive and give them the opportunity to learn and make good progress.

- 3.7 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2014 to 2016. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results achieved by the pupils at GCSE have been above average in relation to the national average for maintained schools and IGCSE results have been higher than worldwide norms. Results at A-level have been in-line with the national average for maintained schools, and in the International Baccalaureate, higher than worldwide norms and the UK average. Data provided by the school indicate that GCSE results for 2017 showed improvement. The school's internal tracking shows that in relation to their starting points, pupils with EAL and SEND perform particularly well. This is the result of imaginative strategies and systems put in place by the current leadership, so that by the time they leave the school they perform as well, or better than their peers.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate excellent skills, knowledge and understanding due to the strong subject knowledge of their teachers, the methods employed by many and the support they receive in their learning. For example, in information and communication technology (ICT), higher level skills and knowledge were developed through a lesson which demonstrated the use of industry-standard software for a music production task. Pupils display curiosity beyond the syllabus in some subjects because teachers adapt the lesson plan to accommodate their questions without losing the lesson's focus. At its best, planning is tailored for the individual and guides the pupils in their academic progress. The recent promotion of active learning, where pupils are encouraged to participate more, rather than just listening, perform tasks and then reflect on them, has improved pupil engagement. This is reinforced by individual pupil development plans which help staff, pupils and parents keep regularly informed of the progress that is being made. In best practice, there is evidence of departmental strategies with detailed marking to highlight strengths and weaknesses in work and which involve pupils in reflecting and setting targets, although this is not yet fully developed across all subject areas. New prep arrangements for boarders have improved their independent learning and the quality of their prep. Boarders spoke warmly about the role of seniors in the houses and their sharing of issues with tutors and welfare prefects which, they said, support junior boarders in their overall education. The boarding houses all accommodate areas for private and collective study and a quiet place for personal reflection.
- 3.9 Academic scholarship beyond the classroom is outstanding as opportunities have increased since the previous inspection, so that a pupil recently won best philosophical poem at a local competition and others have gained awards for writing a play in French and a theological essay. Pupils achieve significantly at regional and national level in sports and the arts, both collectively and in individual pursuits such as judo, fencing and ballet. New options, such as lacrosse and girls' cricket, have enriched the programme and younger pupils recognise the expertise and commitment that have improved their skills in their chosen activities. The school choir recently sang with the Sistine Chapel Choir at a papal mass at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. A very large majority of pupils in Year 9 participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme and the school facilitates certification for diving awards. Co-curricular involvement for all pupils in the form of the *Wider Curriculum* is one of the key elements of the school development plan and a member of the leadership team has direct responsibility for this area of school life. The leadership, management and governance at the school have promoted this development in order to ensure the outcomes for the pupils are enhanced with better provision. This has led to significant improvement in the range and quality of activities, clubs and societies, which is much appreciated by pupils. This has been achieved through engaging specialist staff to help deliver

this programme and quality has been further enhanced by a system of observations and surveys whereby pupils are able to self-evaluate their experiences. Pupils in Years 9 to 13 have individual pupil profiles, designed to encourage reflection on their experiences in the *Wider Curriculum* and to assist them in formulating future goals.

- 3.10 Pupils present as strong and confident oral communicators and also show a great deal of pride in their written work across all age and ability ranges. The school encourages and provides openings for the development of the pupils' skills of communication, including writing competitions and opportunities for presentations in class, in collective worship, pupil-led assemblies, clubs and societies. Support is provided for SEND and EAL pupils to ensure that their written and verbal skills develop equally effectively. In social settings, pupils are highly articulate, speaking fluently and with courtesy to anyone with whom they are engaged in conversation. When given similar opportunities in their academic work, they demonstrate this same skill, giving clear and precise responses to questions which invite their imagination. Collaborative working is encouraged, fostering excellent listening skills, as the pupils demonstrate a mature and attentive approach, learning greatly from each other. Interesting initiatives have been introduced to enable pupils to support each other in the school community, such as Year 9 pupils who acts as reading mentors for pupils in Year 7. Pupils develop confidence to use rich vocabulary, as seen in high-level debating in Year 10 history on British foreign policy leading up to the second world war, and in discussions in French on open prisons and over-population where pupils in Year 13 used appropriate vocabulary and structures to express their opinions. Pupils said that debate and discussion form a regular part of their history, economics, business and politics lessons. Pupils achieve a high level of technical language in written work seen in sixth form physics and psychology. English books seen in Year 11 display a highly competent study of textual analysis and persuasive arguments.
- 3.11 Pupils are enthusiastic and confident users of ICT and commented particularly on the development of a digital class management tool which they have actively embraced in subjects which use it. Pupils use laptop and tablet computers in class and the initiative, which is yet to be fully embedded across the curriculum, is promoted as a tool to improve teaching and learning, particularly effective for pupils with SEND. The computers interact with the class management tool to allow the teacher to provide tailored work for pupils with differing abilities both within the class setting and for prep. In their questionnaire responses, a few pupils felt that their lessons were not interesting, but all of those met during the inspection reported that they are energised by this innovation. Usage is becoming more common in classes and this new digital strategy is promoting a more integrated approach that encourages rather than dictates and the pupils are excited about this development. ICT is also used in many ways within the classroom as a resource, an interactive teaching tool and with specialist software applications. Particularly dynamic use was seen in music where pupils were able to use digital editing software and in photography where digital collages were produced with photographs previously taken using a vortoscope.
- 3.12 Pupils demonstrate high standards in numeracy and often use their skills to analyse, extrapolate and comment on trends and data that appear in academic subjects such as in Year 8 where pupils use graphs and data in geography and religious studies and in Year 12 where their use of complex mathematical formula and thinking enables them to solve problems. They understand the importance of quantitative analysis in their research. There are opportunities to develop further numeracy skills outside of the classroom via clubs and competitions, such as the code breaking society and the mathematics challenges. Pupils with EAL and SEND are closely supported mathematically and have access to a numeracy specialist, enabling them to match or exceed their peers' achievements.
- 3.13 Pupils display excellent study skills and are challenged by the high expectations of their teachers. This is evident in the effective note taking seen in pupils' exercise books and files which are, in many cases, immaculately presented. The pupils appreciate the feedback, time given and dedication of their teachers in improving their learning and consequently they develop more responsibility for their progress and improve their performance. As they move up the school they are given opportunities for

further research and tasks that stretch and challenge the most able. For example, in Year 9 science projects, pupils complete a project on an aspect that interests them. Sample topics include *How humans affect the marine world* and *Should sugar be regulated as a drug?* Many sixth formers opt for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in which they produce work which demonstrates excellent planning, project management and self-evaluation and display their ability to synthesize, analyse and form conclusions. *The Lucet* magazine is a publication where the school's scholars choose topics and produce high quality work on areas of their own personal interest. Recent topics include *Nuclear fission and fusion*, *Perfect pitch – the musical phenomenon* and *Social media – a force of evil?* These articles show analysis of source material, hypothesis and well-thought out conclusions.

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

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils leave the school as self-confident young adults ready for the next challenge and a key objective is to find the correct balance of academic and extra-curricular activities for every pupil. The school places great emphasis on the individual journey that pupils travel through the school. The pastoral care provided is tailored to meet the pupils' needs, where they can develop a deeper sense of self-belief and resilience. This is helped by exposure to strong role models from the time they join the school; older pupils, the staff and the monastic community, so that by the time they reach their final year they have developed a good understanding of themselves, their strengths, weaknesses and aspirations for the future. Pupils have a strong sense of what they need to do to improve their academic performance due to greater use of informative feedback, and constant focus on success criteria. They are aware of their own potential capabilities and are resilient in the face of setbacks, in part due to a robust pastoral system that supports them in establishing where they want to be, with targeted interventions where necessary. Pupils do not feel pressured to fit into a certain mould and are supported by the school community. Pupils in the lower school commented that the school shows them who they are and that they know themselves better as a result.
- 3.16 Relationships between pupils of different ethnic and religious backgrounds are exemplary. They are permeated by mutual respect and a desire to learn from each other. Pupils who join the school from other countries are generally eager to learn the customs and values of their host country and home students are equally keen to learn from them. In lessons pupils make positive contributions to discussions which highlight differences in cultures; for example, pupils in Year 8 explored the role of the monarch, and two sixth form boarders spoke to the house about events surrounding Robert Mugabe and his governance of Zimbabwe. The boarders encouraged their peers to reflect on what it might be like to be a citizen of Zimbabwe following his resignation. These discussions were followed by prayers for the people of Zimbabwe. Diversity is not only respected but celebrated within the community, and the Benedictine foundation and Catholic ethos are at the heart of everyone's outlook. Boarding is seen by the pupils to promote cultural tolerance and understanding and the ethos of working with people is a lived-through value.
- 3.17 Pupils are confident that their decisions will be respected, whether about the termly activities they will choose, the subjects they will take at GCSE and beyond, or the way in which they will participate in the spiritual life of the school. They value the structured programme which prepares them for university and career applications and most appreciate being able to participate in mornings of reflection when they can focus on leadership and the opportunities which lie ahead. As a result, they become firm in their own values before they meet new challenges. Pupils' decisions about their own lifestyles and issues such as the misuse of drugs and alcohol are based on detailed information and exposure to talks from external speakers, who give first-hand experiences on which they can make their choices. Excellent guidance is given to the sixth form with regards to future careers. The leadership has facilitated a new management post in order to develop and strengthen the provision of information on careers and higher education. The school is developing a programme of preparation

for the world beyond school: a comprehensive, integrated and staged approach to 'future perspectives'.

- 3.18 The spiritual side of school life is clearly integral to its ethos and the Benedictine tradition of service palpably influences many aspects. Pupils much appreciate the opportunities they are given for reflection and prayer, integral to the school's ethos, where the lay chaplains, and four from the monastic community, complement the daily life of each member of the school. Benedictine values underpin the life of the school and both the abbey and the chaplaincy are places where the pupils of all faiths can explore their own religious life in a non-threatening way. As a result, they are confident in expressing their convictions, at whatever stage they may be on their spiritual journey. Pupils value the support and patience they experience as they partake in a range of activities, which may be as simple as sharing a meal with older pupils, or in participating in a visit to the Taizé community. Pupils demonstrate their ability to think in depth about issues such as *The Enigma of a Loving God*, due to varied opportunities afforded to them, one of them being the pupil-edited magazine *Identity*. This is also apparent in the work which older pupils complete in their extended projects. The presence of *Forerunners*, a team of youth ministers who work in collaboration with the monastic community and the chaplains, is valued by pupils spoken to during the inspection, particularly as they relate well to their needs being closer in age. Pupils benefit from a calm and reflective environment when the pupils, staff and monk chaplains meet together each week on a Wednesday afternoon in the abbey church. The inspectors observed this to be an uplifting and respectful drawing together of the whole community.
- 3.19 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils have ample opportunities to work together, in class, in activities, and in houses where they organise social and charitable events. During a registration period in a day house, pupils clearly enjoyed their weekly experience of singing together, ably and supportively led by one of their peers. In the classroom, in houses and as they move around the well-presented school campus, pupils are cheerful and courteous, welcoming to visitors and ready to engage in conversation, not just about their life in school but about national and world affairs. Pupils from different age groups mix naturally, as they would in a family, and are quick to identify and integrate anyone who could appear to be isolated. If they have any concerns about their peers they are proactive in reporting them to the appropriate members of staff. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to learn from each other in a variety of situations. They demonstrate a collaborative approach to their education. Cooperative learning is a common feature in lessons and many pupils demonstrate strong teamwork in activities such as musical rehearsals.
- 3.20 Pupils are very proud of the contribution that they and the school make to the wider community through fundraising and the school's social outreach programme which operates locally. House charities give pupils ownership of fundraising and the senior pupils and staff talk enthusiastically about the charity projects that they are involved with. The *Worth in the Community* project is undertaken eagerly by the pupils, as it offers exciting cross-curricular opportunities to engage with, for example, the *Science for Africa* activity, where a group of pupils of different ages are working together to produce a set of science experiments which older pupils will take to a school in Uganda later in the year. Prefects take their school and house responsibilities extremely seriously and are appropriately trained. They undertake a Chartered Management Institute level 3 leadership qualification to aid them in post and in later life. Prefects exercise their responsibility conscientiously; for example, they act as servers in chapel, report issues of routine to pupils and initiate academic lectures. House Council members encourage all pupils to discuss concerns with their year group representatives and ensure they know where recent minutes are published. The younger pupils genuinely aspire to these roles, whilst they too have leadership opportunities to take on roles appropriate to their age. Younger pupils regard the prefects as a pastoral triage and there is an *I need help* button on the school's intranet that initially goes direct to the senior pupil leaders at the school. The pupil community knows this goes to their peers who filter the issues that they can deal with and pass more serious matters to appropriate staff.

- 3.21 The campus offers a haven of peace, but pupils are also well prepared for life beyond school, with specific emphasis placed on the way they should behave when they go off site, locally and further afield. In the questionnaires, a very large majority of pupils agreed that they feel safe at school. From their entry to the school, they are also advised on the safe use of the internet and social media and almost all agreed that they know how to stay safe on line. Pupils appreciate that some restrictions to internet access are made in their own best interests. They are quick to cite the care of the staff as fundamental to their sense of security, physically, emotionally and spiritually. In the questionnaires, almost all parents said that boarding staff understand and are responsive to their child's needs and circumstances. Pupils also enjoy the many opportunities for physical exercise and some speak positively about the variety and quantity of the school lunches, although in the questionnaires, a minority of boarders agreed that the food provided is of sufficient quality and quantity. Inspectors found that the food was of variable quality, but portions were adequate and second helpings were available as requested. Age-appropriate food is provided separately for younger pupils, middle school and sixth form, and breakfast is universally praised by all the boarders.
- 3.22 Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and of the consequences of their actions. The school has high expectations of pupil behaviour and pupils understand the use of sanctions, such as detentions and de-merits. In the questionnaires most pupils agreed that they are encouraged to behave well and an overwhelming majority of parents said that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Pupils respond positively to the patient nurturing of their teachers, they take great pride in the mature and considerate way in which they conduct themselves, and as they embrace the ethos of the school they are well prepared to make an invaluable contribution to the world beyond school.

#### 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 two governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended Wednesday collective worship in the abbey church. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

##### Inspectors

Miss Sue Duff	Reporting inspector
Mrs Rebecca Hayes	Compliance team inspector (Deputy headmistress, GSA school)
Mr James Burns	Team inspector (Assistant head, HMC school)
Mr John Cox	Team inspector (Senior teacher, HMC school)
Mr John Gale	Team inspector (Director of boarding, GSA school)
Mr David Williams	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Miss Margaret Connell	Team inspector for boarding (Former principal, GSA school)
Mr Matthew Thornby	Team inspector for boarding (Director of boarding, HMC school)