



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

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

**BERKHAMSTED SENIOR SCHOOL**

**SEPTEMBER 2017**



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## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Berkhamsted Senior School			
<b>DfE number</b>	919/6005			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	310630			
<b>Address</b>	Berkhamsted School 131-133 High Street Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 2DJ			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 358000			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@berkhamstedschool.org			
<b>Principal</b>	Mr Richard Backhouse			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Gavin Laws			
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	1218			
	<b>Boys</b>	677	<b>Girls</b>	541
	<b>Day pupils</b>	1158	<b>Boarders</b>	60
	<b>Seniors</b>	814	<b>Sixth Form</b>	404
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19 to 21 September 2017			

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Berkhamsted School was founded in 1541 by the Dean of St Paul's under licence from Henry VIII. The girls' school was added to the foundation in 1888. The schools were amalgamated in 1996, together with the respective preparatory and junior sections. In 2011, following further mergers with local preparatory schools, Berkhamsted School became Berkhamsted Schools Group incorporating six schools for pupils between five months and 18 years of age, under the direction of the principal. The group is a charitable company limited by guarantee, whose trustees and directors act as the schools' governors. The senior school operates as a combination of separate single-sex schools, each on a separate campus, and a co-educational sixth-form school.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, there has been major refurbishment and improvement of buildings and facilities and a re-organised senior management team. The curriculum has been developed and new initiatives in teaching and learning practice have been co-ordinated throughout the group's schools. A new principal was appointed in January 2016.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to deliver the highest possible standards of pastoral care and education both in and out of the classroom. It seeks to nurture pupils' enjoyment of learning, engendering a spirit of enquiry and intellectual independence, and to encourage the pursuit of excellence within a disciplined and stimulating learning environment. The school aims to immerse pupils in a diverse co-curricular programme for acquiring broader skills and interests which promote self-esteem and a sense of well-being. It aspires to encourage enterprise and a spirit of adventure, responsibility, leadership and a commitment to service, and to foster moral and spiritual values through the Christian tradition of the school, placing emphasis on integrity, tolerance and respect for others.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Day pupils are drawn mainly from professional and business backgrounds in the surrounding area and north London which reflect the cultural mix of the local communities. Boarders are drawn mainly from overseas, particularly the Far East. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in Years 7 to 11 is above average. In Years 12 and 13, the ability profile is average for pupils in sixth-form education. Two pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC) and the school has identified 236 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly dyslexia, of whom 113 receive support for their learning. Thirty-five pupils have English as an additional language, three of whom require language support.

## 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 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. 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 unmet 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. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), 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.
- 2.3 A-level results in the years 2014 to 2016 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 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. The 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.

- 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 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 excellent.

- Pupils achieve high standards across the school, and past performance in public examinations shows that pupils have made excellent progress to GCSE and to A level.
- They show outstanding communication skills, both orally and in writing.
- Pupils enjoy excellent levels of success in the comprehensive and challenging extra-curricular programme and in many other out-of-class activities.
- Pupils show pronounced and highly effective study skills, especially those involving independent and collaborative learning.
- Their attitude to their work and learning is nearly always exemplary.

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

- Pupils show a strong understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and use this awareness to make informed decisions about their lives.
- They develop increasingly well-developed spiritual awareness during their time in the school, shown by their willingness to reflect on non-material aspects of life.
- Pupils show excellent moral development and take responsibility for their own behaviour and relationships with others.
- Pupils demonstrate outstanding social development and awareness and enjoy working in teams to achieve a common goal.
- They contribute positively to other people, both within and outside the school, through the responsibilities they are given, and the community volunteering initiatives.

## Recommendations

3.3 Within the context of these excellent outcomes, the school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Further develop the tutorial provision to promote and support pupils' individual accountability for their learning and progress.
- Ensure that all teaching contributes positively to the pupils' progress and enjoyment of lessons.

## THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

3.5 Pupils achieve high standards across the school and their all-round success represents strong fulfilment of the school's academic aspirations and aims. Pupils' achievement is stimulated by leadership and management initiatives at all levels which embrace a vision and commitment to raise performance and ambition, and encourage innovation in teaching and learning. It is also supported strongly by governors who are highly aware of the challenges of modern education and provide the resources and facilities to meet the school's educational needs. Pupils' subject knowledge and skills, and their ability to apply their understanding to other subjects are strong. Many can apply theoretical concepts to practical situations and their command of technical terms and vocabulary is good. A-level pupils demonstrated very effective understanding of the social and historical contexts

of literary texts. GCSE pupils could discuss why earthquakes do not always occur at tectonic plate boundaries. Younger pupils demonstrated excellent knowledge of the structure and function of specialised animal cells. Pupils' creative ability is strongly evident in their art, music and drama. Pupils' academic success owes much to the teaching, some of which is outstandingly effective. Their achievement and learning are enhanced when the teaching stimulates interest and provides appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. A very large majority of parents' questionnaire responses confirmed their view that the teaching enables their children to make good progress.

- 3.6 Analysis of pupils' external examination performance is based on the three-year period 2014 to 2016, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE results have been above the national average for maintained schools. The overall proportion of the highest grades A\* and A increased slightly in 2017, particularly for girls. Results in IGCSE have been above worldwide norms. Results at A level have been above the national average for maintained schools. In 2017, the overall proportion of the highest grades A\* and A was broadly similar to the previous year. These results, together with standardised measures of progress available, show that pupils made excellent progress to GCSE compared with those of similar ability elsewhere. Progress over time to A level has also been excellent. Judged by the lessons and work seen, and the outcomes of interviews with them, pupils of all abilities and ages make good progress in the short term and, for many, progress is excellent. The vast majority of pupils' questionnaire responses indicated that the school gives them opportunities to learn and make progress. Those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress, as shown by the quality of their work and test and examination performance. Pupils' progress has been supported strongly by key school initiatives such as GCSE subject clinics and support groups, alongside efficient and robust monitoring of progress and the implementation of strategies for positive intervention by tutors. The structure of the evening in boarding houses, and the ready availability of support from peers and adults, are greatly valued by boarders and contribute positively to their academic progress. A further measure of progress is indicated by the higher education destinations of sixth-form leavers. Pupils have achieved success in gaining places at the most competitive universities and for subjects with demanding entry requirements. On a few occasions, pupils' progress was slower when the teaching did not challenge them fully or when it provided insufficient opportunities for them to contribute and think for themselves. A few pupils supported this view in the pre-inspection questionnaires, feeling that a significant proportion of lessons failed to capture their interest.
- 3.7 Pupils show outstanding communication skills. Their oral contributions are mature for their age and they present an argument convincingly, backed up with appropriate evidence. Pupils of all ages stated that their confidence in speaking and expressing their opinions in class and elsewhere had grown during their time at Berkhamsted. Pupils listen with respect, and challenge each other's views constructively and sensitively. They answer questions confidently and ask questions willingly which often catalyse animated discussion by the whole class. Older pupils show an increasing ability to explain theoretical and abstract concepts. Pupils' writing is highly effective and they communicate fluently and persuasively in a variety of literary styles and contexts.
- 3.8 Pupils' competence in numeracy is good and developed particularly well in mathematics lessons. Most can apply their numerical ability in other subjects, when given opportunities to do so. GCSE and A-level scientists use their knowledge well to solve complex calculations. Pupils feel that they have the necessary background knowledge to interpret information and data from graphs of various types, and can make sense of statistical information in subjects such as geography and economics. Pupils apply their considerable ability in information and communication technology (ICT) with ease to enhance their learning. Many show competence in using cloud-based technology, allowing them to collaborate on the same task simultaneously. Pupils' technological skills are applied to great effect in producing multi-media video presentations, including animation techniques. Pupils use subject-specific software in design technology and photography with confidence. Pupils use tablet computers imaginatively to record data and information, and to facilitate peer assessment.

- 3.9 From an early stage, pupils show pronounced and highly effective study skills, appropriate to their age. Strong research skills are evident in many examples of project work, and older pupils, in particular, show excellent ability to assimilate and analyse a wide range of sources, evaluating their significance, and employing their reasoning ability effectively. They make accurate predictions, for example of the properties of unknown materials, based on their knowledge of molecular structure. They link cause and effect to explain many natural and human phenomena. Younger pupils increasingly understand the attributes they need to learn and develop sound study habits. More able pupils produce scholarly, well-organised and appropriately reflective analysis in their written submissions, for example through researching the political systems in Germany and linking historical events with current conflicts. Younger pupils understand the importance and value of independent research. They can identify resources available and are successful in working collaboratively.
- 3.10 Pupils enjoy excellent levels of success in their extra-curricular and out-of-class activities. They enjoy and benefit from a balance of opportunities in areas such as sport, leadership, arduous outdoor activities, the performing arts, fine art, enterprise and volunteering, and practical activities, acknowledged by most pupils' questionnaire responses. These allow them to develop as confident, well-rounded young people. The strength of the programme is that it enables those of particular ability and specialist talent to succeed in their chosen endeavours at the highest levels, while encouraging others to try new activities and to derive great satisfaction from their own personal levels of success, whatever they may be. In this, they are helped by the school's monitoring of pupils' participation to avoid overload, and by careful scheduling of activities to avoid clashes. Especially notable is the success of boys and girls at local, county and national level in over ten sports; excellent achievement in music, speech and drama examinations, many at distinction level; and success in various national competitions such as in debating, languages, mathematics and the solar car challenge. Pupils' participation and achievement in enterprise and arduous activities is notable. A significant proportion of the school, both boys and girls, put personal and physical effort into their successes in all three sections of the combined cadet force (CCF) and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme at bronze and gold levels. Pupils gain entrepreneurial skills through a number of enterprise activities involving the local communities and charities.
- 3.11 Pupils nearly always display exemplary attitudes to their work and learning and they are keen to participate and succeed. When discussing the most interesting thing they had learnt so far this term, pupils revealed their strong sense of enquiry, curiosity and thirst for knowledge. They have a keen desire to seek out the relevance of what they learn, and link it to contemporary issues, current affairs and everyday situations. For instance, pupils explained the fascination of learning about stem cell research, how they valued the chance to understand the effect of inflation on the British economy, and the discovery of the causes and impact of Hurricane Irma. Older pupils reported that the school nurtured their development of intellectual curiosity. Pupils' positive attitudes are sustained by the support and approachability of teachers who give willingly of their time to provide help and encouragement. They are also nurtured and supported by the tutorial system which is increasingly focused on providing tailored support and enabling pupils to take responsibility for their own progress. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work as well as its content. Younger pupils show great effort in completing many detailed and comprehensive projects. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively, learning from and helping each other in group and paired tasks. These particularly benefit pupils in the boarding houses, as they are able to share academic problems with their peers. Pupils show a notable propensity to work independently, taking initiative in planning and carrying out the tasks given to them.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils show strong self-understanding and recognise their strengths and weaknesses. They develop great self-confidence during their time in the school, particularly in their ability to speak out in class

and express their opinions. Many cited their awareness of the need to push themselves and become more resilient, for example in DofE expeditions. Those in the CCF recognise that they have developed greater self-discipline which, in turn, benefits their academic work. A few pupils' questionnaire responses suggested that they do not feel that the marking helps them to improve their work and they do not fully know how well they are progressing. Pupils remarked, however, that oral comments and feedback are effective and that systems to encourage the self-assessment of their progress are vital in identifying appropriate targets for improvement. The requirement for pupils to write an analysis of their own reports helps them to understand their academic strengths and weaknesses, but many acknowledge that they find this difficult. This increased accountability for their own learning is supported by the tutoring provision which, at its best, provides close tailored one-to-one support. Sixth-form pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives through various activities and initiatives and the development of professional skills, such as chairing meetings, organising groups, researching issues and producing and presenting reports.

- 3.14 This increasing self-confidence and self-knowledge help pupils to make informed decisions about themselves. They recognise that choices have consequences and that good planning and a consideration of alternative courses of action are usually helpful. Pupils make important decisions in many areas of their lives, such as in subject and higher education course selection, planning and carrying out successful DofE expeditions and CCF activities, and in carrying out their assigned leadership roles. Such activities help pupils to take the initiative in making group decisions. Pupils say that they derive significant benefit from the individual and joint decisions they make through the school council, planning for activities and organising charity events. Boarders recognise that the decisions underpinning communal living have implications.
- 3.15 Pupils develop increasingly strong spiritual awareness during their time in the school, shown by their willingness to reflect on non-material aspects of life. The great majority of pupils spoken to regard the chapel as a valuable place for quiet reflection. They regard many of the presentations in chapel and assemblies as thought-provoking and memorable. Their willing engagement in many lessons and enthusiasm to research and debate the great mysteries of life enhance their spiritual understanding. They showed thoughtful responses to philosophical discussions and successfully wrestled with challenging concepts such as the nature of good and evil, and the concept of love. Their essay and project work demonstrates a growing awareness of the significance of human existence and interactions.
- 3.16 Pupils show excellent moral development. They understand the importance of identifying with key school values which help them in their personal relationships. Pupils understand and respect the existence of a school code of conduct and realise that rules and laws are necessary for the safe and orderly running of the school community and society in general. This is promoted by the school through the positive reinforcement of conduct and effort. Older pupils recognise and appreciate the responsibility that comes from the additional freedom enjoyed by sixth formers. Pupils of all ages expressed strong support for the values and guidance provided by the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and tutorial discussions in house time. They felt that these were beneficial opportunities to discuss issues that affected them, such as conflict in relationships, peer pressure and respect for others. In lessons, pupils show a thoughtful understanding of moral dilemmas when discussing ethical challenges facing society such as the validity of war, the inequalities of rich and poor, and issues of gender equality. One group discussed and recognised the importance of carrying out acts of kindness and how these can have a positive effect on others. Pupils acknowledge the expectation of mutual respect between staff and pupils and among themselves that enables them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils understand that they are frequently sent out into the local community and that the school confidently relies on them to do what is right and act in a responsible and mature manner.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate outstanding social development and awareness. They value the rich diversity of opportunities to work together to achieve a common goal or enterprise, and exercise responsible

leadership. In this, they are supported by the range and breadth of the taught and extra-curricular programmes which stimulate interest and enable them to learn important life skills such as co-operation, resilience, flexibility and sensitivity. Those in the CCF stated that they learnt the need for close co-operation and the acquisition of skills required to empathise as well as lead others. Those in the Young Enterprise project and higher levels of the DofE recognised the benefits of active and positive collaboration to reach a goal. This was strongly endorsed by pupils taking part in large-scale music and drama events, and organising house competitions. Boarders enjoy the collaborative nature of the boarding experience. Pupils' strong personal development owes much to the encouragement and personal example set by staff, and the strong and well-managed pastoral system that recognises and responds to pupils' individual needs and circumstances, and promotes their well-being. Most parents responding to the questionnaire felt that the school provides an environment that successfully supports their child's personal development. Another key contributory factor in the pupils' success is the system of school values and expectations which underpin all aspects of pupils' lives and which are promoted strongly by governors and school leaders.

- 3.18 This strong social development is harnessed and applied highly effectively to enable pupils to contribute positively to the lives of others, both within and outside the school. The extent of their success is due to the breadth of opportunities available to pupils to develop a sense of service. Senior CCF pupils reflected on their responsibility, recognising that younger cadets were reliant on them and often had to trust their judgement. Pupils volunteer willingly and enthusiastically to participate in a wide range of community endeavours. Pupils say that engagement with the wider community teaches them valuable life skills such as empathy and recognising the challenges faced by those less fortunate than themselves. Many value the life-changing experiences that these opportunities provide. Pupils have a strong commitment to organising charity events, realising that raising awareness of the charity's aims is as important as fundraising.
- 3.19 Pupils have a strong sense of tolerance towards and respect for those different from themselves. They recognise that communities are made up of those with different religions, beliefs and cultures. Pupils feel that, although the population of the school and the local community is not extensively diverse, they respect others and are nevertheless aware of the issues and tensions sometimes faced elsewhere in society. They feel that the school positively encourages respect and tolerance through assemblies and house/tutor time, and consequently these widened their horizons and understanding of other cultures. They display a pronounced sense of acceptance of others in different circumstances and recognise the need to avoid discrimination, whether through race, disability or gender-orientation. In their writing, older pupils show a mature sensitivity of such issues; for example, their writing about the position of ethnic minorities in Britain showed tolerance and empathy. Pupils fortunate enough to participate in overseas sporting and cultural trips, and those visiting Berkhamsted's link school in South Africa, are keen to share their experiences with their peers. Boarders joining the school in the sixth form feel that the experience of living together helps them to communicate and widen their experiences with others. Pupils have a strong appreciation of their own culture through, for example, their art, music and drama.
- 3.20 Pupils confirm that the school provides them with comprehensive knowledge and skills to enable them to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils of all ages are clear about the risks posed by the mis-use of digital technology. They confirm that they fully understand the importance of exercise and the benefits of good nutrition, and recognise the consequences of substance abuse. They understand that the choices they make have implications for healthy living. They acknowledge that their emotional health is well supported by the school and its pastoral systems, and state that the school is quick to support pupils suffering from stress or taking on too much. Pupils generally feel that their work/life balance is well managed, and appreciate the support provided by the school's well-being group and its team of counsellors.

## 4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house and form meetings and chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses. 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

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting inspector
Dr Sarah Jane Welch	Compliance team inspector (Principal, ISA school)
Miss Elizabeth Knibb	Team inspector for boarding (Pastoral vice-principal, HMC school)
Mrs Kathryn Crewe-Read	Team inspector (Head, SofH school)
Mrs Barbara Elliott	Team inspector (Head, GSA school)
Dr Christopher Enos	Team inspector (Director of studies, GSA school)
Miss Jacky Gill	Team inspector (Head of department, HMC school)
Mr Colin Haddon	Team inspector (Deputy head, ISA school)
Mr John Pearson	Team inspector (Director of studies, HMC school)
Mr Nicholas Plater	Team inspector (Academic deputy head, HMC school)