

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports  
For Schools with Residential Provision**

**Westminster Cathedral Choir School**

**November 2018**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Westminster Cathedral Choir School			
<b>DfE number</b>	213/6197			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1063761			
<b>Address</b>	Westminster Cathedral Choir School Ambrosden Avenue London SW1P 1QH			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7798 9081			
<b>Email address</b>	office@choirschool.com			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Neil McLaughlan			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr David Heminway			
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 13			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	229			
	<b>Boys</b>	229	<b>Girls</b>	0
	<b>Day pupils</b>	205	<b>Boarders</b>	24
	<b>EYFS</b>	20	<b>Juniors</b>	147
	<b>Seniors</b>	62		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20 to 22 November 2018			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Westminster Cathedral Choir School is an independent day and boarding school for boys between the ages of four and thirteen years. It was founded in 1902 to educate the choristers of Westminster Cathedral. The choristers are all full-time boarders who are accommodated on the upper floors of the prep school, and all the other pupils are day pupils. The school is a registered charity and the proprietor, the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustee, delegates responsibility for oversight to a board of governors. Since the previous inspection a pre-prep department for pupils in Reception to Year 3 has been established in a separate building close to the prep school. The school has refurbished its playground, science, classroom and boarding facilities. It has adopted a new curriculum for all year groups, with an emphasis on subject knowledge and cultural literacy.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.2 The school aims to offer an outstanding, classical and demanding academic education to all boys and to transmit the Catholic faith with joy and fidelity. It seeks to support a world-class choir for Westminster Cathedral while offering boys outstanding musical opportunities. The objective is to prepare boys for continuing education through responsibility, experience and opportunity including enriching extra-curricular activities, team and individual sports.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.3 Choristers come from many parts of England. Day pupils come from professional families living in central, south and west London and represent a wide range of nationalities, principally British, Spanish, Italian, French, German and American. Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the school is above average. The school has identified 23 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 15 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for eight pupils, one of whom requires additional support for his English. The needs of pupils identified as being gifted and talented are met through extension and project work together with extra-curricular clubs and activities.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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. 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](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

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

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. 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.
- 2.6 **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**

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 **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**

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 **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**

2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, 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.

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

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

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

**2.15 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**

2.16 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.

**2.17 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**

2.18 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.

**2.19 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 are highly successful at gaining places at boarding and day senior schools with competitive entry requirements.
- The choristers achieve exceptional musical standards.
- Pupils demonstrate an extremely broad body of knowledge and understanding, gained through the school's integrated classical curriculum.
- Pupils are successful in a wide range of non-academic activities such as instrumental music and sport.
- Pupils' achievements are strongly supported by their keen intellectual curiosity, motivation to learn and well-developed study skills.

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

- Pupils are welcoming to all, have a strong sense of social responsibility and are keenly aware of the need to show the kindness and respect they themselves would like to be shown.
- The choristers show high levels of personal organisation, self-discipline and inner strength to enable them to manage their exacting schedule.
- Pupils develop a mature sense of spirituality, gained through opportunities to experience worship in the cathedral and exposure to the beauty of art, literature and music.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.

## Recommendations

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following:

- Increase opportunities for older pupils to develop and apply their information and communication (ICT) skills.
- Ensure that written feedback, which informs pupils of how to improve their work, is delivered consistently.

## 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 meets its aim to provide an outstanding, classical and demanding academic education to all pupils. Throughout the school pupils' academic attainment as judged from the performance in lessons, their written work, subject interviews and leavers' destinations is judged to be high relative to national age-related expectations. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) most children are at, and often exceeding, the expected levels for their age. Information from the school's tracking of standardised and internal assessment data indicates that all pupils make at least good progress consistent with their abilities, and those with SEND and EAL make good if not slightly better progress from their starting points, due to effective interventions and targets. The school's analysis of academic data for the choristers indicates they are making good and for some, excellent progress, in relation to their year group. The leadership ensures that they receive additional academic support where necessary to compensate for their musical commitments. Most pupils reach the required standard for entry to highly selective London day or boarding schools. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress, that the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities are suitable and that the school helps their

child to develop skills for the future. These positive views are reflected in the pupils' responses; most agree that there is a good range of subjects, teachers help them to learn and make progress and that teachers give them help with any problems in their work whilst encouraging them to think and learn for themselves. The school's leadership is vigilant in monitoring pupils' academic progress to ensure they are on track to meet high expectations, through targets set by staff and pupils, and that suitable interventions are instigated should performance dip. Governance also maintains strong oversight through the termly academic committee.

- 3.6 As they move through the school, pupils develop outstanding breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding arising from the school's integrated classical curriculum, where, for a year, each subject includes topics which contribute to a particular historical period. Each period is visited three times during the pupils' school career so that as they mature they develop an astute understanding of the impact of history on science, mathematics, religion, literature and the arts. For example, pupils show a broad understanding of medieval times, gained through practising medieval embroidery techniques, learning about medieval flood defences, Pascal's work on number triangles, medieval alchemy and studying a Shakespearian play. The pupils show a strong ability to apply their knowledge to understand current affairs. For example, pupils in Year 6 unpicked the etymology of words such as oligarchy when considering the origins of democracy. Teaching is very well planned and proceeds at a brisk pace, so that much ground is covered. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to include interesting additional information; pupils respond eagerly so that progress is rapid. Pupils reach and explain correct answers because their thinking is extended through challenging questioning, such as in geography, where pupils showed excellent awareness of the earth's physical structure and used sophisticated technical terms to recall various component parts of the earth's crust and core. Pupils develop a strong understanding of scientific theory and an understanding of how scientific knowledge has evolved and apply this confidently in independent investigations as well as in group tasks.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate the necessary theoretical and technical skills to support their high standards of musicianship. For example, pupils in Year 8 use composition software capably to write piano accompaniments and add other instrumentation to their settings of carols and then evaluate their work critically. The boarders, in particular benefit from scheduled practice time where supervision is available. Pupils demonstrate their creativity not just in music, but in art. After studying the 'Codex Amiatinus' and discussing the importance and nature of religion in medieval times, they created intricate book marks using calligraphy and illuminated manuscript techniques. The physical abilities and skills of pupils, including the choristers, are well developed and they show much enthusiasm for sport.
- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills are strong. They contribute eagerly in lessons, are highly articulate and use a wide vocabulary. Their oral confidence is promoted through the many opportunities they have to speak or read at assemblies and worship. In many lessons, such as observed in English, they reflect back and refine one another's ideas. They relish discussion, aware of the need to consider both sides of an argument. Pupils build on the secure phonetic grounding they receive in Reception to become expressive and enthusiastic readers who show strong textual comprehension. Work, such as undertaken by Year 8 on *Great Expectations*, reflects pupils' perceptive ability to understand the social context of the novel since they naturally make links in their learning. Pupils develop highly proficient writing skills and report that they enjoy creative writing having established a correct understanding of sentence structure in Year 1 and a competent grasp of grammar and syntax in the middle years. Pupils' poetry shows a strong understanding of form, gained from writing and performing poems in the pre-prep and regular poetry declamations by all pupils in the prep. The oldest pupils write well-structured essays which show their considerable ability to synthesise knowledge from teaching and their own research. The excellent cursive script seen in a recent school handwriting competition is not always carried over into pupils' exercise books.

- 3.9 Pupils enjoy mathematics and show high levels of numeracy across the school. Younger pupils establish secure concepts through learning with practical resources. As they move through the school they develop speed and accuracy in mental operations and older pupils cite this facility as a strong element in their later mathematical competence. Limited use of calculators ensures pupils sustain their speedy mental mathematical skills. The pupils' ability to conceptualise their knowledge of number work and apply it to solve problems is excellent due to teaching's focus on breaking down steps to achieve, and then explain, methodology. Throughout the school pupils are set challenging work and almost all attempt and cope well with extension tasks. Pupils' motivation in mathematics is further promoted through a weekly puzzle competition, and participation in national mathematics challenges. Mathematical skills are successfully applied in science, art and geography.
- 3.10 Younger pupils develop age-appropriate skills in ICT. For example, children in Reception learn to control a programmable toy, having first developed a sound grasp of directional language. Pupils enjoy using ICT and by Year 5 are able to use common office and publishing software applications confidently. A coding club enables those with an interest in computer science to develop their skills. Older pupils use music software competently and research topics in their prep. However, as the leadership has identified, they do not have regular opportunities to use ICT to build on the foundation previously established to fully prepare them for their senior school studies.
- 3.11 Pupils are keen to acquire the necessary tools for independent learning and the youngest begin to make reasoned hypotheses. For example, children in Reception make sensible comparative judgements considering the size and weight of animals to determine family relationships. Pupils use a wide variety of study skills effectively and are as competent taking notes as in writing essays. They use sources capably such as where empathetic writing about life in the trenches by pupils in Year 5 showed excellent assimilation of subject knowledge and an understanding of cause and effect. They are well able to consider a range of alternative responses to tasks and to apply deductive reasoning to establish and communicate the most accurate response. A minority of boarders are not confident that boarding helps them with their academic work. Inspectors found that the boarders are able to make suitable progress and keep up with their work in addition to their choral duties, through careful academic monitoring and additional support from their tutors, such as in revision skills when necessary.
- 3.12 Pupils are successful in a range of activities outside of the classroom. The presence and contribution of the choristers ensures that music permeates school life and all pupils have access to teaching and musical experiences at the highest level. Whilst the choristers display notable standards of musicianship and performance, day pupils' choirs also achieve highly, resulting in invitations to perform in public such as in *The Nutcracker* at the Coliseum. Pupils achieve high grades in external instrumental examinations and have many opportunities to develop their skills in orchestra and ensembles. Each year the leavers rehearse and perform in one week, a Shakespeare play. Pupils take part and are successful in national poetry competitions. They are encouraged to discover and develop their individual interests and talents. For example, individuals have performed leading roles in a London Theatre, created and developed a commercially available board game and are working for their black belt in karate. Talented sportsmen are successful in gaining awards to their senior schools and the school's football, rugby and cricket teams are often successful in competition against larger schools.
- 3.13 The pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes to their activities and work are strong determinants of their success. They display a clear sense of direction and are intellectually curious and hard-working. They are attentive and persevere with challenging tasks so that the atmosphere in class is extremely conducive to productive learning. Boarders concentrate well in a professional adult music environment and show considerable resilience and a determination to succeed due to the strong teamwork and the support offered them by staff in the boarding community.

## The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Due to sensitive pastoral care and opportunities for performance, pupils develop self-confidence, such as when reading or serving at public mass in the cathedral. Older pupils display perceptive self-knowledge and resilience. They have a strong work ethic and desire to improve and are motivated to attain their targets and secure entry to the senior schools of their choice. A small minority of pupils do not agree that marking helps them understand how to improve their own learning. Whilst they receive helpful and encouraging verbal feedback in class, written feedback is not consistent in offering them specific advice on how to improve their work. Many pupils show self-discipline and perseverance such as those who sing or play an instrument to a high standard. Most boarders feel that this experience helps them become more confident and independent. The choristers show immense resilience in managing their exacting schedule. To do this they develop considerable self-organisation and time-management skills and assert that taking personal responsibility prepares them well for senior school.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate a growing ability to make independent choices and an awareness of the importance of sensible decision making. Children in Reception display independence in choosing activities before lessons begin, deciding when they want to move to another task. As they grow older pupils enjoy choosing from challenging additional exercises in class. Some older pupils volunteer to mentor reading with younger pupils and feel that, in making this choice, they are providing useful support and being positive role models. While some boarders thrive on the highly structured day which arises from their choral and academic commitments, a small minority do not feel that there is a suitable balance of free time and activities in boarding time. Having undertaken a review of boarders' schedules as compared with other similar choir schools and implemented its recommendations appropriately, the leadership continually seeks to ensure boarders have sufficient time to relax and that their welfare is always kept under consideration. To provide further pastoral support a school counsellor is available to speak to any pupil.
- 3.17 As they grow older, pupils develop a strong spiritual understanding derived from observance of the school's Catholic ethos. For example, older pupils told inspectors that they understand spirituality to be personal to the individual, enabling them to live by what they think is right. They feel this to be important in empowering them to resist peer pressure. The nature of prayer, which is central to school life, is explored, so that from an early age, pupils devise their own prayers such as considering the aspects of their lives for which they wish to give thanks. Younger pupils are able to explain why they experience a sense of gratitude due to sensitive questioning from staff which helps them articulate their thoughts and feelings. Pupils state that mass is an opportunity to stop and reflect, particularly about the message behind the gospel reading. In attempting to define spirituality, older pupils displayed a mature appreciation of transience, suggesting that belief in God outlasts any material possession. The many musical pupils demonstrate a well-developed aesthetic awareness, as do those who work so carefully to produce pieces of art which reflect their appreciation and understanding of the work of artists throughout history.
- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate a significant respect for cultural diversity and value the presence of different nationalities in the school community. They assert that anyone of whatever faith is welcome in the school, frequently quoting the school's rule 'Do to others as you would like to be treated', as a benchmark for how they evaluate their attitudes and behaviour, and state that kindness and respect is always important. Pupils, including non-Catholics, are most respectful during worship. They have some understanding of major world faiths though expressed their desire to learn more about them. The pupils develop a deep understanding of western culture and understand how values have emerged over time derived from their curricular studies which are enhanced through visits to significant places from history. In the questionnaires, the vast majority of pupils and their parents agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.

Pupils were observed to show one another great consideration, for example taking turns so each one could express their view to inspectors.

- 3.19 Pupils' sense of fairness and understanding of right and wrong is clearly evident. They develop their moral values in the light of the Church's teaching, such as when discussing issues around good leadership when learning about St Benedict, and are able to link religious knowledge with modern day viewpoints. They also consider ethical issues thoughtfully in subjects such as geography, history and civics. As they grow older pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of the mechanism of law, supported by watching the Commons live on television and visits to the Houses of Parliament. In civics, pupils entered into a lively discussion on the function of the Magna Carta as one of the origins of English law going on to a consideration of human rights. Pupils' generally good behaviour is the result the implementation of a clear system of sanctions and rewards. They report that teachers help them to learn to accept responsibility for their own behaviour through discussing with them the significance of consequences. In the questionnaire, all the parents and almost all the pupils agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour.
- 3.20 Pupils are very friendly and personable; their social skills are well-developed. They say they get on well with each other and are confident of teacher support when they need it. Pupils cooperate well together in the school and boarding councils, showing the ability to listen to and respect differing viewpoints and confident their suggestions make a difference. The boarders live and work alongside one another harmoniously and told inspectors that they support one another in a small community where each chorister is well known by the boarding staff. Pupils demonstrate a sense of fair play and good sportsmanship when playing team sports. The choristers display exceptionally high levels of team commitment as they blend their individual voices to produce the choir's characteristic sound, and instrumentalists collaborate purposefully in a variety of ensembles to achieve high levels of performance.
- 3.21 As they progress through the school, pupils willingly take on increasing responsibility, acting as classroom monitors, prefects, librarians and heads of school. All the senior choristers exercise leadership within the boarding house and in the choir. Pupils carry out their responsibilities assisting in worship with great dignity and respect. Pupils state that improvements such as the distribution of more rewards and additional clubs and activities have arisen from their suggestions in school council. Older pupils are acutely aware of the juxtaposition of the school with neighbouring areas of deprivation and understand that in their showing concern for the vulnerable in the neighbourhood they are living out the duty of service as required by the Catholic faith. Consequently, with the support of their parents, they assemble Christmas boxes and pupils in Year 8 deliver these with organisations who provide support to the poor and homeless. Choristers and the day boys' choir sing in the wards of local hospitals at Christmas. Pupils are well-informed through talks in assemblies about the school's longstanding commitment to support at times of the church's year where Christian duty requires almsgiving, eye surgeons from a local hospital who provide expert care and surgery in Tanzania.
- 3.22 Pupils develop a confident awareness of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They understand the role of a nutritious diet and the importance of water due to topics covered at age-appropriate levels, and the boarders are particularly aware of choosing foods which fulfil their energy needs yet maintain their health. Pupils enjoy the opportunities given for sport and are strongly aware of the benefits of exercise to their overall fitness. They are confident that they know how to stay safe online due to informative talks from external speakers. Older pupils who, with parental permission, travel to and from school alone, are confident that they know how to stay safe on the street and when travelling on public transport. Older pupils, in particular, are aware of the key part that happiness plays in their emotional health. The school has identified the need to include more teaching on mental health to support pupils.

## 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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, mass and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting inspector
Mrs Christine Rees	Compliance team inspector (Former head of boarding, HMC school)
Mr Timothy Smith	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Christopher Sparrow	Team inspector for boarding (Head of boarding, IAPS school)