



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**WHITGIFT SCHOOL**

**MAY 2017**



## **CONTENTS**

<b>SCHOOL'S DETAILS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>4</b>
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
<b>2. KEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>6</b>
Recommendation	6
<b>3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>10</b>

## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School College</b>	Whitgift School			
<b>DfE number</b>	306/6014			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	312612			
<b>Address</b>	Haling Park South Croydon London CR2 6YT			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8688 9222			
<b>Email address</b>	office@whitgift.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Dr Christopher Barnett			
<b>Chairman of governors</b>	Mr Geoffery Wright			
<b>Age range</b>	10 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	1465			
	<b>Boys</b>	1465	<b>Girls</b>	0
	<b>Day pupils</b>	1358	<b>Boarders</b>	107
	<b>Year 6</b>	61	<b>Years 7-11</b>	1052
	<b>Sixth form</b>	352		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10 to 11 May 2017			

## 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. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates on behalf of the DfE, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest report on the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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 following their inspection 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.

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.

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 an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting 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.

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 the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. 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'.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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 form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses, together with 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

Mrs Jean Marsland	Reporting inspector
Mr Anthony Duffield	Team inspector (Head of science, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Freestone	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mrs Rosalynd Kamaryc	Team inspector (Principal, GSA school)
Mrs Sue Lucas	Team inspector (Former teacher, Society of Heads school)
Mr William Norton	Team inspector (Director of sport, HMC school)
Mr Stephen Willis	Team inspector (Director of music, GSA school)
Mrs Nicola Botterill	Team inspector for boarding (Headmistress, GSA school)

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Whitgift School is an independent academically selective day and boarding school for boys aged between ten and eighteen years. The school was founded in 1600 by John Whitgift, Elizabeth I's last Archbishop of Canterbury. It moved to its present site in 1931.
- 1.2 The school is one of three owned by the Court of the Whitgift Foundation. Foundation trustees have ultimate responsibility for the school; much of the day-to-day oversight of the school is devolved to the school's governing body, a committee of the Court. Boarders are accommodated in Founder's House, opened in April 2013. Flexi-boarders are accommodated in the White House.

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

- 1.3 The school strives for excellence in all aspects of school life. It aims to promote a culture of achievement, mutual respect and tolerance in a stimulating and life-enhancing environment; offer a broad, balanced, challenging and innovative curriculum and co-curricular programme; and prepare pupils for the challenges and opportunities beyond school.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils come from diverse ethnic, cultural and occupational backgrounds. Day pupils are from London boroughs and surrounding counties, and boarders come from the UK and around 20 other countries. Nationally standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils throughout the school is above average. The school has identified 122 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include specific learning difficulties and/or social difficulties; 107 receive additional specialist help. Also, 3 pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special needs for communication, interaction and/or specific learning difficulties. English is an additional language (EAL) for 62 pupils; 21 receive additional specialist support. A large proportion of pupils have particular academic aptitudes; they are supported in departments and through the whole-school enrichment programme. A significant number of pupils have exceptional gifts and talents across music, drama and sport. The school provides specialist staff to support these pupils.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Lower 1	Year 6
Upper 1	Year 7
Lower 3	Year 8
Upper 3	Year 9
Lower 5	Year 10
Upper 5	Year 11
Lower 6	Year 12
Upper 6	Year 13

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

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

- All pupils make progress that is at least good and often excellent.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding across a wide range of activities.
- Pupils' communication and study skills are excellent and successfully underpin their achievement.
- Pupils' attitudes to their studies and to their work in activities are excellent and fully support their achievements.

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

- Pupils' relationships with each other and staff are excellent and display a high degree of respect and tolerance.
- Pupils' awareness and appreciation of diversity and their levels of tolerance are excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of maturity for their age.
- Pupils show high levels of self-confidence without boastfulness.
- Pupils are candid and open in expressing themselves, and do so in a way that respects the views of others.

### **Recommendation**

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Ensure that all teaching offers sufficient challenge and interest so that pupils are enabled to make the most progress possible.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve academically at a high level, fully meeting the school's aims. Over the previous three years, results at both GCSE and at A level have been well above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Over the same period, results at IGCSE and IB have been higher than worldwide norms, with IB results also higher than UK averages. Pupils' high levels of achievement in the sixth form enable them to successfully gain admission to their chosen universities, both in the UK and further afield. The excellent achievement of pupils is underpinned by the commitment of leadership, management and governance to ensuring an environment of ambitious expectation which promotes in pupils the desire to aim high and work for success.
- 3.3 All pupils including the more able make progress that is at least good and often excellent. Pupils with SEND or EAL progress equally well. The overwhelming majority of pupils in their questionnaire responses said that the school provides them the opportunity to learn and make progress. This was confirmed in discussions with pupils, in samples of their written work and in lessons observed.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages demonstrate high levels of knowledge, skill and understanding which they apply successfully across all areas of the curriculum and in their activities. For example, pupils in their study of modern foreign languages demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding, and are at ease at all stages in lessons which are taught almost entirely in the target language. Younger pupils were observed to be coping well with explanations of grammar points given to them in German, and sixth form pupils understood the intricacies of the French election process which was explained to them in French. Pupils successfully apply their high levels of knowledge and understanding to new tasks and to solving challenging problems; pupils in science were observed identifying alkenes from their structures and working out why they caused certain chemical reactions, and physical education pupils demonstrated excellent understanding of muscle groups which they applied effectively to analyse the groups used in different sporting actions.
- 3.5 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent communication and study skills. Their written skills are excellent for their ages and they demonstrate a sophisticated level of writing across the full range of writing styles. Pupils' creative writing displays a clear understanding of how to create characters and evoke atmosphere, as observed in examples of pupils' poetry, short stories and play scripts. They write equally well in reporting events, analytically and in documenting their own research. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are excellent. They are confident in using a range of ICT skills to support their learning across all areas of the curriculum; pupils in biology were seen capturing data from a simulation exercise, and in music using software to compose music and then refine its notation and nuance. Pupils are highly articulate in expressing their thoughts, and in doing so demonstrate sophisticated levels of reasoning and understanding and the ability to analyse and deduce complex ideas. This was observed in geography where pupils were discussing tensions between North and South Korea and evaluating the possible implications for world peace, and in the work done in the sixth form Critical Review Club which considers postgraduate-level articles.

- 3.6 At all stages, pupils have excellent numeracy skills which they apply highly successfully across the curriculum, for example in interpreting graphs and manipulating data. Their excellent mathematical knowledge and understanding means pupils are able to go beyond the obvious and explore underlying mathematical principles, such as in the mathematical elements that underlie musical formations, and the mathematics in design technology (DT) that underpins the relationship between the tension of a cog and the distance a vehicle will travel.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They arrive well prepared for lessons, ready to contribute, expecting to display initiative and independence, and keen to assess and challenge ideas. Pupils relish opportunities to explore ideas and to debate across all areas of their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative studies. They recognise the benefits of working with others, of hearing others' ideas and opinions, and of learning from others. Boarders in particular learn the benefits of working together from the opportunity they have to live and work alongside other highly motivated and aspirational pupils who inspire their fellow boarders to aim high and commit to making the effort needed to achieve success. Pupils work equally well independently; they enjoy the freedom to undertake their own research in areas of interest to them, such as sixth form economics pupils' collection of research papers produced for their Whitonomics magazine, and in creative writing projects in Years 6 and 7.
- 3.8 In attaining these high levels of achievement, pupils are exceptionally well supported by the curriculum and by the commitment of leadership, management and governance to offering pupils a bespoke curriculum that plays to their strengths and enables them to achieve at the highest levels. This curriculum offers younger pupils a wide breadth of subjects, and from Year 9 a highly personalised programme of study whereby the school adapts subject choices and teaching arrangements to suit each individual pupil, thus enabling pupils to follow their strengths and interests. This high quality was confirmed by the overwhelming number of parents in their questionnaire responses, who indicated that the range of subjects the school offers is suitable for their children. Pupils' individual programmes are based on an in-depth knowledge of each pupil, underpinned by an extensive programme of frequent assessments. Examples of these personalised programmes are the arrangements made for pupils with exceptional talents who split their time between school and specialist training in sports and music, and the teaching of A level mathematics to talented younger pupils. The excellent achievement and progress of pupils with SEND or EAL and of those who are more able or have exceptional talents is enhanced by the excellent support these pupils receive from the learning support department, who design individual programmes to support pupils in maximising the amount of progress they make and offer study skills sessions open to all pupils before and after the school day.
- 3.9 The pupils' high levels of achievement are further well supported by the teaching they receive. Teaching is often inspirational and pupils benefit from the many opportunities provided to them for independent thinking, and from the way in which teaching encourages and welcomes pupils' intellectual challenge. In the many lessons in which this is the case, even with the youngest pupils, there is the feel of a university-style tutorial with pupils and teachers enjoying working and learning together. This is highly successful in motivating pupils and raising their expectations of what they can achieve. Such teaching is entirely successful in promoting pupils' achievements and supporting them in making maximum progress. In interview, pupils expressed their gratitude to staff who willingly give up their time to provide them additional support one-to-one in departmental subject clinics, or in additional activities such as weekend sessions to support university applications. Occasionally, teaching is less successful in promoting pupils' achievement and supporting their progress. In these lessons teaching does not offer sufficient challenge, thus causing pupils to lose interest, disengage from learning and achieve less. This was confirmed in pupils' questionnaire responses, where a small minority

disagreed that most lessons are interesting. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, the overall quality of marking has improved. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils said that marking does not help them to improve their work. The inspection's scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work demonstrates that most marking provides detailed feedback to enable pupils to make further progress, and this was confirmed by pupils in interview.

- 3.10 Pupils' achievements beyond the classroom in the co-curricular programme are outstanding, with many pupils achieving high levels of success across many areas of interest including sport, music, creative writing, in the Combined Cadet Force, in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and many more. Pupils are frequently successful in competitions at a national level; pupils have won over 120 national titles in the last 5 years across a range of sports. National success is also seen across a range of other activities including sport, music, drama and business.
- 3.11 The pupils' excellent achievements across a wide range of activities is supported by the outstanding variety of opportunities provided by the leadership, management and governance. This diverse range includes activities such as beekeeping, French debating and cookery, alongside an extensive programme of sporting and musical activities. This breadth of activities was confirmed by almost all parents in their questionnaire responses, and a very large majority of pupils' questionnaire responses indicated that they can be involved in a good range of activities. In interview pupils again said that they are grateful for the time staff give to these activities, and for the school's willingness to put on additional activities if pupils request them and to employ specialist teachers and coaches at the highest level. All of this means that pupils can achieve across many areas and at high levels, fully meeting the school's aim for pupils to strive for excellence in all aspects of school life and to promote a culture of achievement.

#### 4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The high quality of the pupils' personal development is fully in line with the school's aim to inculcate positive values of mutual respect, tolerance and self-esteem, so that pupils by the time they leave the school are well prepared for the next stage of their lives and for their future roles in the wider society. Pupils during their time in the school develop high levels of self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-discipline and resilience. They have a realistic understanding of their own strengths and talents, and are confident in this knowledge without arrogance or boastfulness.
- 4.3 Secure in who they are, pupils of all ages display high levels of respect for and tolerance of each other whatever their backgrounds or beliefs. They respect and value diversity within society and have strong friendships with fellow pupils from very different cultures, nationalities, backgrounds and beliefs. Boarders' personal development is excellent and they relate well with other boarders from many varying backgrounds. They benefit from living and working alongside others from these different backgrounds, and in doing so learn to appreciate and respect those differences; they enjoy the opportunities boarding provides to celebrate the festival days of the different cultures represented in the boarding house. In interview, pupils confirmed that those from different backgrounds get on well with each other. They said that this is so much the culture within the school that they were surprised to be asked the question. Pupils expressed that they appreciate the opportunities these friendships afford them in learning more about different backgrounds and traditions. Pupils in lessons were observed to show sensitivity, understanding and respect for the opinions and values of those from different backgrounds, such as in critical reflection when discussing capital punishment, and in their mature attitudes to different cultural expectations in their study of *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. The overwhelming majority of parents' questionnaire responses confirmed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This view was confirmed in discussions with pupils by a very large majority of pupils' questionnaire responses.
- 4.4 Pupils of all ages are spiritually aware. They demonstrate a clear understanding and appreciation of non-material aspects of life, be that in their own beliefs and values or in appreciation of music, art and the world around them. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities for reflection offered in lessons such as critical reflection which pupils say they value, and in assemblies and activities, a good number of which offer opportunities to explore spirituality and to appreciate creation and the arts. In interview, pupils recognised that their personal development is enhanced by the school environment. They appreciate the space it affords for personal reflection and the opportunity it offers them to develop a sense of awe at the beauty and variety of creation as well as the beauty of their surroundings, and they appreciate the quiet areas where they can sit and reflect. Pupils' appreciation of the school environment fully meets the school's aim to provide a stimulating and life-enhancing environment in which to live, learn and appreciate the school's heritage.

- 4.5 Pupils are socially aware and work effectively with others both in school and beyond, including in solving problems and in achieving common goals. This is evident in the leadership and support offered to fellow pupils by pupils with positions of leadership such as sixth form and Year 9 prefects, form representatives to year-group committees, and boarders who head up boarding families. In interview, younger pupils said they value the option to talk to sixth form mentors if they do not feel able to talk with staff. Pupils also demonstrate social awareness through their work for charities, both in the UK and abroad. They raise money for the charities they choose each year through a variety of activities they organise such as cake sales, fashion shows and concerts. Older pupils volunteer in local charity shops, care homes and schools; pupils also regularly take part in charity expeditions.
- 4.6 Pupils are encouraged to have their own opinions and they feel free to express them, whilst accepting that others also have their opinions which should be respected. They learn to make their own decisions and how to weigh up the choices before them. This is clearly evident in younger pupils when they are provided choices within lessons about what topics to investigate. Older pupils choose what subjects they should study, and later take decisions about the next stage of their education beyond school. Pupils say that the school encourages them to think widely and to consider carefully their choices beyond school.
- 4.7 Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong, and have a strong sense of justice. At all ages, they understand the need for school rules, and consequently almost always behave well and treat each other with respect. They recognise that they need to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and understand its effect on others, and are willing to learn from their mistakes. Pupils are aware that many areas of life provoke moral dilemmas. They are keen to explore such dilemmas and take the opportunity to do so as they arise in their study of subjects such as history, science, politics, theology and philosophy, and literature.
- 4.8 Pupils know how to stay safe and be healthy. They understand the need to be physically and mentally healthy particularly in terms of diet and a balanced lifestyle, and they know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Pupils' personal development is well supported by the personal, social and health and economic education (PSHE) programme which encourages them to consider areas such as relationships and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the opportunity provided to suggest topics for inclusion in PSHE and recognise that what they learn in these lessons is of value to them.
- 4.9 Pupils' relationships with each other and staff are almost always characterised by an open honesty and by mutual respect and warmth. These relationships are supported by the effective systems of pastoral support and care that leadership and management have established, which provide a nurturing environment in which pupils can learn and flourish. Boarders said that they also benefit from the support they receive in their boarding families. A small minority of pupils in the questionnaire responses said that they do not feel they have someone to talk to if they have a concern or worry. The school strongly promotes the message that pupils can feel free to talk to staff, but should that not be the case, the school has recently introduced an anonymous online helpline which pupils can access to receive support from staff, and pupils in interview expressed that they value this service.