

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

Aysgarth School

December 2018



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School	Aysgarth Scho	ol		
DfE number	815/6009			
Registered charity number	529538			
Address	Newton-le-Wi	llows		
	Bedale			
	North Yorkshi	re		
	DL8 1TF			
Telephone number	01677 450240			
Email address	enquiries@ays	sgarthschoo	ol.co.uk	
Headmaster	Mr Robert Mo	Mr Robert Morse		
Chair of governors Mr Nimble Thompson		ompson		
Age range	3 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	209			
	Boys	184	Girls	25
	Day pupils	73	Boarders	136
	EYFS	25	Pre-prep	28
	Prep	156		
Inspection dates	04 to 06 Dece	mber 2018		

School's Details

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Aysgarth School is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between the years of three and thirteen. The school is governed by a board of governors, all of whom are trustees. The current headmaster was appointed in 2015. Since the previous inspection the school has created a new art and design-and-technology department and extended sports and activity facilities.
- 1.2 The original preparatory school was founded in 1877 and in 1993 the pre-preparatory school, Oak House, was established on the same site. The school now consists of a Nursery and Pre-Preparatory day school for boys and girls aged from three to eight, and a Preparatory School for boys aged from eight to thirteen, the majority of whom are boarders. All boarders are accommodated in one boarding house.

What the school seeks to do

1.3 The school aims to excel in providing an enjoyable, inspiring and relevant education. It further seeks to provide an excellent all-round preparation in order for its pupils to thrive in their next schools and beyond.

About the pupils

1.4 The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Pre-prep pupils typically live within a 20 mile radius of the school. Prep school pupils who are boarders travel from greater distances, including a small number from overseas. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 45 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional specialist support. One pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for six pupils whose needs are supported by both class and specialist teachers. Pupils who are identified as most able are supported by modifications to the curriculum. Pupils identified with other talents receive similar 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 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, 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 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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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.

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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: <u>The Education (Independent School</u> <u>Standards) Regulations 2014</u>, <u>National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools</u>, <u>Early Years Foundation</u> <u>Stage Statutory Framework</u>.

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. 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.
- 2.8 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and 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

- 2.9 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. The school does not make arrangements for guardianship.
- 2.10 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

2.11 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 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

2.15 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.

2.16 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

2.17 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.

2.18 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. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

School name	National Curriculum name
Reception	Reception
Nursery	Nursery
PP1	1
PP2	2
PP3	3
Form 1	4
Form 2	5
Form 3	6
Form 4	7
Form 5	8

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils have exceptionally well developed communication skills.
 - Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards their own learning.
 - Pupils enjoy excellent levels of success both academically and beyond the classroom.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils have outstanding social skills: they readily engage with others and exhibit a real desire to
 please.
 - Pupils are extremely well behaved and well-mannered towards other pupils and adults.
 - Pupils' spiritual awareness is well developed, with the school's Christian ethos establishing a firm foundation, and they have a good awareness of other cultures.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the pupils' excellent personal development, the school might wish to consider:
 - Deepening the pupils' understanding of other cultures by further emphasising the relevant approaches of the curriculum at all ages.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils make exceptional progress as they move towards the next stage of their education. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make excellent progress in relation to their starting points so that almost all meet, and some exceed the expected level of development for their age. Data provided by the school indicates that the personal, social and emotional development of children is excellent, and that all children make excellent progress in both literacy and numeracy skills. Pre-prep pupils thrive in the stimulating learning environment teaching provides. Scrutiny of their work and observations in lessons confirm the school's data that they make excellent progress in all areas of skills and knowledge. Prep school pupils win places at the school of their choice with many achieving academic and other scholarships. The leadership's objective to improve its assessment procedures across the school has resulted in more sophisticated tracking and monitoring of individual pupils so that each can be provided with targeted support. Data provided by the school supported by observation of written work and lessons show that there is little difference in the rate of progress between pupils of different gender, ability, age or special educational need. Almost all parents and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agree that teaching enables their child to make progress.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages, abilities and needs demonstrate an excellent level of knowledge, understanding and skill across a wide range of subjects studied. Teaching is well planned and successfully responds to individual interests and needs. In the EYFS children's creative, sensory and physical development is enhanced by the varied indoor and outdoor spaces that have been designed to meet their needs. Younger pupils demonstrate excellent manipulative skills when handling tools and machinery in their design and technology work. Older pupils demonstrate increased maturity towards their learning through a curriculum designed to develop their abilities and prepare them for the transition to senior schools, many of which have demanding entry requirements. They willingly answer challenging questions, extend their understanding and make rapid progress for example when exploring gaseous exchange during respiration.

- 3.7 Pupils throughout the school are highly articulate and eager to engage in discussion and debate. They demonstrate exceptional speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Boarders concentrate attentively to the daily Radio 4 news which is broadcast during breakfast. Pre-prep pupils are confident readers enabling them to quickly engage with the demands of their lessons for example when quickly interpreting the meaning of number count questions. Older pupils, including those with EAL, are avid readers and their interests range from articles in scientific periodicals to Tolkien. They produce entertaining and imaginative writing as seen in a parody of *Animal Farm*. Excellent persuasive writing was seen in scholarship pieces of extended writing. They are proficient in their use of scientific terminology.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages, abilities and needs enjoy working with mathematical ideas engendered by the enthusiasm and subject knowledge of their teachers. Pupils manage numbers with ease and children in the EYFS count with confidence. Pre-prep pupils enjoyed competing to rapidly identify odd and even numbers. Prep school pupils are competent in their handling of population growth data and efficiency equations. Pupils successfully apply their numeracy skills, particularly those concerned with handling data in a variety of subjects. Exceptional prowess in mathematics is demonstrated by older pupils who achieve much success in their common entrance examinations and in external competitions. Outstanding geometrical art work is on display.
- 3.9 Because of investment in information and communication technology (ICT) resources initiated by the senior leadership team and supported by the governing body, pupils throughout the school and in many different subjects make confident and most effective use of ICT. The curriculum is well planned to ensure pupils have the required level of skill to be competent users. In pupil work seen there were many examples of pictures and graphs embedded into work in English, science and geography fieldwork. Pupils have written interesting facts on the invention of the microscope from their own research. Pre-prep pupils demonstrated excellent use of tablet technology to independently record one another being interviewed as a Trojan. Older pupils used software applications to great effect to research different ages of maps of Bedale.
- 3.10 Pupils throughout the school have extremely well developed study skills relative to their ages. This was seen to excellent effect in project work done in geography, history and English. Lesson planning incorporates opportunity for both independent and collaborative working, thus enabling pupils to develop the required study skills that will underpin their learning. Younger prep school pupils enthusiastically went out in their Wellington boots and measured the actual length of the school cross country course and compared this measurement with their original hypothesis. Older prep school pupils confidently hypothesise their ideas about the properties of the alveolus, analyse and synthesise their prior knowledge and thus draw correct conclusions on these sophisticated ideas and concepts.
- 3.11 Pupils enjoy high levels of success not just in the classroom but also in music, drama, creative arts, sports and many of the other activities offered by the school. Senior leadership places emphasis on the breadth of the opportunities that are on offer to the pupils, each of whom builds a curriculum vitae over time as a record of their involvement. Pupils have been highly successful in many sports, notably rugby in which school teams regularly win prestigious tournaments. Many pre-prep pupils represented the school at a recitation festival where they performed extremely well. The senior school choir has performed at a wide range of venues including Chatsworth House and Ripon Cathedral. Musical instrument lessons are taken by a large number of pupils who achieve a high level of success in external examinations. Pupils relish the challenge of and achieve successes in academic competition including the UK Mathematics Challenge, short story, history and poetry competitions. Art work of an extremely high standard is displayed in the new art wing and throughout the school.

3.12 The pupils' commitment to their own learning is exemplary. Pupils willingly and confidently take ownership of their learning. They have extremely positive attitudes to study and this is reflected in the typically high quality of work done in class and beyond. The leadership team place great emphasis on pupils developing these positive attitudes as they progress though the school and the planning of teaching encourages the development of these skills. Children in the EYFS approach their individual painting with great enthusiasm. They are keen to explore the wide range of resources made available to them. Older pupils concentrate on individual drawings, they work very well independently. Pupils take leadership in their learning and use initiative when interpreting a design brief and then deciding how to construct their suggested design piece. Group work is a considerable strength of the school with pupils eager to collaborate with others. Younger prep school pupils worked together effectively in a question and answer session to describe the character of Mr Tom. Older pupils worked successfully in pairs when comparing maps in geography and deciding appropriate measurements in science. The very large majority of boarders who responded to the questionnaire agreed that boarding has helped them to become more confident and independent and this was confirmed both when talking to pupils and when observing them working in lessons.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 At all ages, pupils rapidly develop resilience and self-confidence as they enjoy the country environment with its associated woodlands. They enthusiastically involve themselves in outdoor activities such as the youngest pupils jumping in puddles. As they progress up the school, pupils develop a positive sense of self knowledge, self-esteem and self-discipline through the supportive sense of community that also encourages self-reflection. All pupils demonstrate a keen awareness of how to improve their learning. Across the school pupils respond positively to the many forms of helpful feedback they receive from their teachers. Children are proud when they receive a sticker for good work in the EYFS. Other pupils benefit from a well understood and consistently applied marking system. They can explain how they know they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. They demonstrate an excellent ability to reflect on their own learning when talking about their own work in English and how it can be improved based on the feedback they receive. Pupils are supported by a wide range of activities that develop a broad variety of other attributes and skills, including mutual trust and respect. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their lives. In the prep school, pupils speak very warmly of the individual attention that they are given to prepare and achieve their ambitions, including the transfer to the senior school of their choice. In the pre-prep school pupils receive the same individualised support. In the questionnaire, almost all pupils agree the school helps them to be confident and independent, and a very large majority of boarders believe that boarding has helped them in developing these qualities.
- 3.15 Pupils are very aware that the decisions they make affect their individual and group successes. Pupils have many opportunities to make choices, from the huge range of activities, to join choir or music groups, to play games or to stand for leadership posts such as on the school council. They also have the choice of the effort they put in and readily accept that academic success requires appropriate effort. Pupils speak positively about their own well-being and know how to seek help should they require it. Boarders say how the overall experience of boarding allows them to make decisions for themselves, building their own self-confidence, independent learning skills and adaptability. Pupils are effective decision makers in the classroom. Children in the EYFS enjoy choosing their activity from the wide range available. Older pupils make choices about whether to use a text for additional help or whether to attempt more challenging questions. Pupils are involved from an early age in the decision making process regarding their next schools.

- 3.16 As they progress through the school, pupils develop an increasing sense of spiritual awareness underpinned by the school's core Christian ethos. Pupils explore spiritual and philosophical themes in their PSHE and religious education and welfare lessons. Older pupils write thoughtfully on pacifism and link their writing to passages in the Bible. Pupils have looked at art work by Magritte to inspire them to describe God with empathy. Pupils talk positively about the benefits of the daily service in Chapel as a time for inner reflection. They show respect and awe in the singing of hymns and prayers. The vast school grounds and the local countryside environment enable pupils to develop a keen appreciation of the wonder of nature.
- 3.17 Pupils are extremely well behaved and naturally well-mannered towards other pupils and adults. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and respond very well to the rewards system. Senior leadership and all staff place a great emphasis on good behaviour and manners. Pupils talked of their pride when they are 'sent up for good' for exceptional work. Younger pupils consider moral choices and the need to take responsibility for their own behaviour when completing their reflective Friday's books. Pupils are aware that bullying is taken extremely seriously, and understand that they must look after their peers and report any instances, although these are very rare. Boarders have a strong sense of values and fairness. Dormitory captains proudly discharge their responsibilities within the boarding houses, acting as positive role models. In the questionnaire almost all of the pupils and parents agreed that the school promotes good behaviour. Pupils live the Aysgarth value of loving and caring for our neighbours as ourselves.
- 3.18 Pupils have outstanding social skills, they readily engage in conversation both with, for example, their peers at lunch or with visiting adults. They exhibit a real desire to please others. In the EYFS, children understand how to play and work together because of the positive reinforcement by staff. Pre-prep pupils work purposefully with a partner. Pupils enjoy working together to solve problems such as when conducting scientific experiments, unravelling maths problems or when both training with and competing in their sports squads. Strong collaborative learning is a feature of many lessons. Art week provides an exciting way of bringing the pre-prep and prep school pupils together to share their love of art. Pupils speak positively about the boarding experience, the strong sense of community and how it helps them to make new friends.
- 3.19 All pupils develop a sense of inclusivity in the school and this extends to their neighbours. Pupils are encouraged by staff to express their ideas and opinions through the pupil school council, which is very active in ensuring that pupil ideas and suggestions to help the pupil body are considered and implemented when possible. Prefects, dormitory captains and pupils with other responsibilities are very active in ensuring the well-being of others, including of younger pupils. They are proud of their fundraising activities for both local and national charities. Pupils donate food to a local food bank and raise funds to help disadvantaged schools in Africa. Pupils enjoy Christmas Jumper day, book week activities and singing at Ripon Cathedral whilst being aware that they are helping others less fortunate. Pupils willingly get involved in the village tidy-up.
- 3.20 Pupils of all cultures and religious faiths show respect and tolerance to others. Staff regularly reinforce this message through assemblies, PSHE and religious and well-being lessons where pupils are encouraged to treat everybody as an equal. The school is developing close links with a school in Uganda allowing pupils to interact with pupils from a different background. Younger pupils have exchanged letters with an orphanage in India and produce work that reflects cultural diversity when describing what they have learned about Diwali. A curriculum has been introduced of which one objective is to enable all pupils to move from an awareness to a deeper understanding and empathy of other cultures. Staff are successfully developing an ethos where difference is accepted and celebrated. In the questionnaire almost all parents and pupils agreed that the school promotes respect and tolerance of others.

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3.21 At all ages, pupils show an awareness of how to keep safe and heathy. They make the most of the many opportunities to take exercise, from running around at playtime, participating in sports to riding their bicycles around the wooded valley in the summer. Pupils talk positively about the advice they have been given on how to keep themselves safe on-line and demonstrate an awareness of the safety rules in subjects such as swimming, science and DT. Leadership and management successfully promote mental health throughout the school. Children in EYFS are able to describe their feelings with the help of the colour monster. Boarders are encouraged by staff to talk about their feelings and are aware of the need to do so.

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, chapel and assembly. 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

Dr Tracey Martin	Reporting inspector
Mrs Serena Alexander	Compliance team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sian Woosnam	Team inspector (Assistant EYFS head, Society of Heads school)
Mr Mark Pymm	Team inspector for boarding (Head of boarding, IAPS school)