



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Hurtwood House School

November 2018



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School's Details

School	Hurtwood House			
DfE number	936/6564			
Address	Holmbury St Mary Dorking Surrey RH5 6NU			
Telephone number	01483 279000			
Email address	info@hurtwood.net			
Heads	Mr Cosmo Jackson and Mr Richard Jackson			
Proprietors	Mr Cosmo Jackson, Mrs Linda Jackson and Mr Richard Jackson			
Age range	15 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	332			
	Boys	115	Girls	217
	Day pupils	49	Boarders	282
	Seniors	8	Sixth form	324
Inspection dates	06 to 08 November 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Hurtwood House school was founded in 1970 as a family owned and run co-educational sixth-form school, and is located close to Dorking and occupying an Edwardian country house set in extensive grounds. The school is run by a limited liability partnership whose partners are the proprietors. Governance is exercised by the proprietors, two of whom are also members of the school's senior leadership and management teams.
- 1.2 There are eight boarding houses, two on campus and six within a short drive from the main school site.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide an education for sixth-form pupils that creates a culture of high achievement, creativity and professionalism within a caring, structured environment. The school aims to develop independence, self-discipline and good behaviour by guiding pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and development in and out of school time.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils are predominately boarders who come from a range of social backgrounds, the majority from professional families. Just under half of the pupils come from overseas, mostly from non-European countries. Most students pursue A-level studies, although a very small number are engaged in an intensive one-year GCSE Foundation course to prepare for A-level work.
- 1.5 Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the sixth form is broadly average. Seventy-nine pupils require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan. Also, 138 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) of whom 74 receive specialist help with English language skills. Gifted and talented students are provided for by extension classes, specialist companies and the Enigma programme.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as met or as not met. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. In addition, the standards relating to boarders' accommodation are also included. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#)

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools. Results in IGCSE examinations have been higher than worldwide norms.
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level performance in the years 2015 to 2017 has been well above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, 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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for 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.
- 2.16 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.18 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.19** The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.20** **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils enjoy working collaboratively in all areas of school life enabling them to achieve at a high level both in and outside the classroom.
 - Pupils are very ambitious and independent learners, eager to make progress when provided with challenging opportunities in the classroom.
 - The pupils relish the opportunities provided by the 'Enigma' programme and produce excellent creativity in the arts and media, fulfilling the school aims for creativity.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils achieve excellent levels of self-understanding and expression.
 - The pupils show a clear respect and tolerance for each other's diversity and cultural background and this is reflected in the inclusive ethos of the school and within the boarding houses.
 - Pupils make informed choices, empowered and supported by their teachers and the life skills programme.

Recommendation(s)

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to:
- Share the best teaching and marking skills to further challenge all pupils in lessons so enabling them to achieve their full potential.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Hurtwood House pupils are educated to a high level in accordance with the school's aim to promote excellence in all areas of education. Pupils acquire very high levels of understanding and knowledge in lessons, such as creative arts and demonstrate exceptional levels of creativity and performance in the extra-curricular programme and the enrichment programme, Enigma.
- 3.6 In the years 2015 to 2017, performance at GCSE and A level has been well above the national average for maintained schools and at IGCSE above worldwide norms. Overseas pupils develop the excellent learning skills in the Year 11 GCSE Foundation year that enable them to successfully progress on to A Level courses. All pupils benefit from the assessment and tracking programme and the weekly tutor meetings, enabling them to have a clear vision of how well they are progressing. They make rapid progress over time, as a result of high teacher expectations in the majority of lessons. An excellent careers programme ensures that these high achieving pupils succeed in gaining admission to first choice university, art, media colleges and drama schools.
- 3.7 Pupils with SEND or EAL make very good progress and are enabled to achieve standards in external examinations in line with those of their peers. In chemistry, for example, EAL pupils achieved a clear understanding of entropy, equal to the more able pupils. They actively seek support from the SEND teaching staff through one-to-one and small group support sessions, as well as the study support provided by the SEND and EAL departments. A level pupils eagerly make use of the lunchtime subject support clinics provided by their subject teachers, recognising that these enhance their understanding and enable them to progress in lessons and with their project work. Boarders greatly appreciate the assistance and support of academic staff, who as house tutors, are available during personal study time in the boarding houses.

- 3.8 More able pupils progress with the provision of suitably challenging work in a large majority of lessons, and further benefit from enrichment through the 'Enigma' programme. They are additionally inspired and profit from extra challenge through extended work projects. Pupils are highly motivated, enthusiastic and determined learners, willingly prepared to take risks, and respond positively to different styles of teaching and challenging opportunities when they are offered. Pupils are inquisitive learners, questioning in lessons and researching on line for homework and projects; as in an art lesson where pupils used the internet to source pictures for 'Drawing for Purpose' art work. Pupils demonstrate a determined sense of purpose, moving calmly and enthusiastically to their lessons, settle quickly and show eagerness to learn and be involved in discussion and questioning. Pupils respond well to guidance in lessons. Most marking sets targets that enable pupils to reflect and make progress. This is supported by a very large majority of pupils' and parents' views, in their questionnaire responses and interviews, that marking helps them to improve.
- 3.9 Pupils use sophisticated language confidently, and are articulate, as observed in Year 13 where they used comparative analysis of two differently challenging play texts and in Year 12 where pupils confidently expressed verbal arguments on the relative merits of Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation of Russia. They are attentive and apply knowledge in class and reason thoughtfully and logically. Literacy is very strong; pupils are avid readers and researchers, utilising the library provision which is stocked with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and periodicals; and which is a hub for pupils' strong levels of independent research. Pupils have developed exceptional essay writing skills, some published, and others winning awards in a range of competitions run by universities and learned societies.
- 3.10 Pupils make informed choices and enthusiastically participate in the 'Enigma' programme of suitably age-related clubs and activities during the school week, activities include hot yoga, mystery bus, climbing and a variety of individual and team sports. Healthy outdoor pursuits include an annual team challenge and 'The Big Walk'. Pupils achieve gold awards in mathematics challenges and Olympiads. Active and skilful participation in art, textile and media presentations enable further enrichment and a number undertake the Extended Project Qualification; this allows them to stretch and exercise their research and analytical skills to a very high level. Pupils also enhance their educational and cultural understanding by participating in visits to destinations in the United Kingdom and overseas. Boarders stated that they benefit from a wide range of weekend excursions to London, activity centres and entertainment venues, which are designed to enrich their boarding experience. Pupils' learning experiences are further enriched by listening to visiting speakers including alumnae to learn about potential careers.
- 3.11 Pupils avidly engage and demonstrate their musical talents; in individual vocal and instrumental work, group work in bands and media productions and several pupils have achieved high level music qualifications. Pupils become confident public performers through involvement in theatre and filming. Pupils have achieved places at the National Youth Theatre and National Youth Musical Theatre and have successfully participated in school productions, including the forthcoming production of *Hairspray*, a lively and vibrant rehearsal of which was observed during inspection: previous productions include *Urinetown*, *Rent*, and *Grease*. Pupils relish the excellent opportunities in all aspects of theatre and achieve high end skills back stage in theatre sound, lighting, stage and costume design with such experiences enabling students to gain entry into national and international drama and film colleges. The Hurtwood Film Academy regularly win prizes for their film projects in a number of national competitions. Examples of their films include; a filmed documentary on the art of side-saddle riding and included coverage of the World Championships in Ireland, *10,000 hours*, a behind the scenes look at Formula 1 training and *Sweeping of Graves*, an investigation of Chinese culture filmed in Hong Kong. Many pupils find pleasure and achieve personal and academic success in creative work and are encouraged to develop their interest and talent in drawing, painting, textiles and photography. A very large majority of parents, staff and pupils agreed in the questionnaires that these opportunities greatly enhance pupils' achievement.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 All pupils show extremely high levels of self-confidence and an excellent understanding of how to progress. Pupils emphasised that their development and successful progress is greatly enhanced by the highly effective personal tutor system which reviews their personal and academic progress and enables timely guidance, support and intervention when necessary. They greatly appreciate the setting of individual academic targets at weekly one-to one tutor reviews and additional termly, high quality, informative reports. Pupils show personal pride in the quality of their work, and their ability to complete tasks inside and outside the classroom. Pupils are unafraid of being wrong and do not judge this as failure but as a valuable learning opportunity. They react positively to challenges and occasional setbacks, and thus develop self-confidence and strong resilience which enables them to respond successfully to the choices open to them at this stage of their educational development. Pupils who recently joined the school reported that the welcoming and supportive inclusive atmosphere enabled them to make a confident start to their school and boarding life. This was further recognised in responses by a very large majority of pupils and parents of boarders.
- 3.14 Year 13 pupils firmly believed that they are well prepared to face the challenges of living and working in modern Britain and overseas through the provision of PSHEE, the 'Enigma' programme and excellent careers guidance. Pupils employ sensible and productive use of their free time, with the support of their tutors, boarding house staff and the pastoral system, making informed decisions regarding their extra-curricular choices. Pupils utilise and appreciate quiet classrooms, the library and study areas, for private study and enhanced learning opportunities with teachers in one to one lessons and subject workshops. Year 11 pupils make informed choices regarding subject options to follow a career pathway, pupils respond successfully to further guidance regarding suitable university or career based college courses. A very large majority of pupils, parents and all staff expressed their confidence that the school provides excellent advice regarding subject and career choice in their questionnaire and this was further reflected in discussion and interviews with pupils, where Year 13 pupils expressed that there was outstanding provision to enable them to make clear decisions regarding university and career pathways.
- 3.15 Pupils have a strong appreciation and great enthusiasm of the non-material aspects of life and they actively participate in creative art and design, musical production, media presentations, theatre performances and sporting activities. They show a genuine appreciation of how tolerance and co-operation make for a better inclusive and caring community. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding that individual success is not the only factor in their development and that co-operation can result in better outcomes as exemplified in theatre production and charity work. Pupils show excellent skills in working together as members of the school community. Throughout the school, pupils eagerly and successfully participate in carefully planned group tasks in their music and drama lessons and the school's outdoor education programme, Model United Nations and other debating activities, and maintaining an inclusive and family atmosphere in the boarding houses. In science lessons and in sports pupils engaged actively and worked together to successfully develop their understanding, co-operation and dexterity skills. In the theatre and media studio outstanding co-operation amongst pupils was observed; as pupil actors, musicians and technicians worked industriously together to produce productions. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to be peer-to-peer guides for new pupils joining the school and who are new to boarding and in interview new boarders expressed how this enabled them to quickly integrate into the community.

- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate high levels of empathy and tolerance towards each other, respecting and valuing diversity. Peer respect is also reflected in the very low levels of bullying that are recorded and pupils who were interviewed did not believe bullying to be an issue. In the questionnaire, a very large majority of pupils felt that staff always treat them fairly. Pupils actively support each other and have an excellent appreciation of the wide range of cultures within the school. They also demonstrate a rich understanding of the key values that characterise modern Britain. Throughout the school pupils appreciate that inclusiveness and unity, rather than difference, is the key to tolerance and harmony. They successfully acquire greater understanding of these characteristics in academic lessons, PSHEE, the 'Enigma' programme and participation in assemblies and educational visits. Pupils have a strong understanding that individuals are responsible for their own actions.
- 3.17 The school council and house councils provide an appreciated forum for the school pupils to have a voice and contribute to the pastoral system. Questionnaires are also widely used, by the school management, to elicit pupil feedback such as developing the 'Enigma' programme to include pupil run activities; Dungeons and Dragons, Beginners Russian and 'MUSE', a pupil blog. Pupils learn effectively about, and understand, the democratic process directly and participate in an annual youth parliament day. Through their active participation in the school council pupils agreed that have a positive and valued opportunity to express their opinions and can air their views on school policies and procedures, such as starting new activities, climbing and skateboarding, menu provision and inhouse and excursion boarding activities. This active voice includes the choice of charities and the manner of fundraising, ranging from cake sales, sponsored running, shoe boxes and other activities through the student led charities committee. Overseas charity commitments include the financial support for a Kenyan orphanage. Pupils are also aware of social needs as exemplified in the 'Hurtwood Film Academy' pupil-initiated and produced a documentary, *A Chance to Shine*; a six-month project following the work of a local school specialising in the education of autistic children.
- 3.18 In their questionnaire a small minority of pupils indicated their concern that the school did not provide a healthy and balanced life style. In interviews an overwhelming majority of pupils articulated a strong understanding regarding their physical and mental well-being and the need for a balanced approach to life, through their willing participation in physical activities as well as their academic studies. Pupils did note that the provision of abundant eating opportunities at the start of term did cause waistlines to increase, and that they appreciated that they had to learn self-control. Pupils value the support of the medical staff and speakers brought in through the 'Enigma' programme to provide guidance in this respect.
- 3.19 Pupils continue to develop the concept of risk taking with the support of the pastoral team and 'Enigma' programme, by accepting that 'if you get it wrong' a new learning opportunity is provided. Pupils fully realise the benefit to the individual and to wider society of a good diet and suitable levels of exercise and pursue these. They participate enthusiastically in the extensive range of individual and team sports provided such as netball, football, mountain biking, climbing and golf.
- 3.20 Pupils make informed choice in many areas of their school lives, subject option choices, their use of free time, activity participation and food choices. However, in their questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils registered their concern regarding the quantity and quality of food. In discussion pupils pointed to the variety of options at all meals and that they were able to choose their own portion sizes. Snacks, ice cream and fruit, as well as drinking water and other beverages are available all day.
- 3.21 The strength of purpose and inclusivity which is apparent in the school is as a result of the commitment of the leadership to very high standards in all the areas of school life. They provide an aspirational and supportive ethos, to which the pupils readily respond. The proprietors are committed to resourcing the school and fully support the senior leadership, ensuring that the aims of the school are clearly met.

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 proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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

Mr Alistair Telfer	Reporting inspector
Mr David Bradbury	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Mr James Prior	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Miss Ann Weitzel	Team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Liam Copley	Team inspector for boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)
Mr Crispin Dawson	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Nichola Haworth	Team inspector for boarding (Head of boarding, HMC school)