



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

STAMFORD SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Stamford School			
DfE number	925/6027			
Registered charity number	527618			
Address	Stamford School Southfields House St Paul's Street Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 2BQ			
Telephone number	01780 750300			
Email address	headss@ses.lincs.sch.uk			
Head	Mr Nicholas Gallop			
Chair of governors	Dr Michael Dronfield			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	687			
	Boys	687	Girls	0
	Day pupils	592	Boarders	95
	Seniors	487	Sixth Form	200
Inspection dates	19 to 21 September 2017			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Stamford School is an independent day and boarding school for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. It was founded in 1532 as a Christian school and is one of the three constituent schools of the Stamford Endowed Schools foundation, the others being Stamford High School (for pupils aged 11 to 18 years) and Stamford Junior School (for pupils aged 3 to 11 years). The school is a charity and the governors are the charity's trustees.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new head, who has been in post for twelve months. Other changes include the refurbishment of all science laboratories, a rolling programme of classroom renewal and the addition of a performing arts centre.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to create a happy, exciting and supportive environment where learning is the priority and young people are inspired to achieve their best in all aspects of school life, to develop their intellectual curiosity and to have a caring and respectful attitude towards each member of the school's community.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data indicate that the ability of senior pupils is above average, while that of pupils in the sixth form is broadly average. The school has identified 145 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 38 of whom receive additional specialist help. Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for twenty-five pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers and through specialist help.

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. 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 2013 to 2016, 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 results in the years 2013 to 2016 have been in line with 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, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

3. EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key Findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils' display outstanding attitudes to learning.
 - Pupils are extremely articulate and express themselves with confidence.
 - Pupils consistently perform to a notably high level in an exceptionally wide range of activities.
 - Pupils' study skills are very well developed.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-understanding and make informed and mature choices.
 - Pupils behave extremely well and are kind and respectful to each other.
 - Pupils exhibit a very strong sense of social responsibility.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of these excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:
- Enhancing and extending pupils' learning by using ICT more across the curriculum.

THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school fully meets its aim to inspire young people to achieve their best. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all the parents agreed that teaching enables their child to make good progress and that their child's educational needs are met by the school. In their own responses, an overwhelming majority of pupils felt that the school provides them with the opportunity to learn and make good progress. These views are entirely supported by evidence gathered during the inspection from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for 2013 to 2016, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Performance at GCSE has been above the national average for maintained schools, while results in IGCSE have been higher than worldwide norms. Results at A level have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. A very large majority of sixth form leavers gain entry to their first-choice of university, the majority of those at highly competitive universities.
- 3.7 Pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL), make good and often excellent progress because most teachers recognise and respect how their pupils learn and plan accordingly. Pupils appreciate their teachers' willingness to support them by offering additional sessions after school or at lunchtime and relationships between teachers and pupils are exceptionally positive.
- 3.8 Pupils develop notably excellent skills in a wide variety of subject areas and are able to apply these usefully to a wide range of activities. For example, they are able to appreciate complex concepts in science and use accurate terminology to express their understanding. Pupils demonstrate excellent linguistic skills when communicating in language lessons and use drawing packages very effectively to create three-dimensional models, showing confidence when experimenting with new techniques.
- 3.9 Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Pupils are self-motivated and productive when working independently, relishing the opportunity to work on projects that are linked but not intrinsic to the curriculum, for example as part of the activities programme organised for the Scholars' Society. They demonstrate excellent group work and collaborative skills and enjoy intellectual debate. This was seen, for example, in A level modern language lessons, where significant enthusiasm and interest were evident in discussions on various topical issues.
- 3.10 Pupils show a strong desire to clarify and deepen their understanding through questioning and perseverance in problem solving. They thoroughly enjoy the challenge of thinking independently and creatively. For example, A level pupils discussed a challenging text with mature understanding as they built towards a comparative analytic exercise in English, referring to high-level concepts such as subliminal admiration and cognitive dissonance.
- 3.11 Pupils are extremely articulate and express themselves with confidence. They enjoy speaking in public and interact comfortably with adults because of the many opportunities that are available to them to deliver assemblies and talks, often by senior pupils to younger ones, as well as presentations in lessons. Pupils demonstrate substantial debating skills, which is well catered for at house and inter-school level. Pupils are equally skilled and prolific in drama, and a number of them achieve gold medals and distinctions in speech and drama examinations. Pupils' musical skills are highly developed, as seen in a school orchestra rehearsal, where musicians showed excellent achievement and collaborative endeavour as they practised a difficult piece by Mussorgsky.

- 3.12 Pupils show high levels of literacy and a marked ability to write creatively, for example in the school's magazine and in a newly introduced blog. Pupils read well and respond to their teachers' encouragement to read widely at home, recognising its value and how it impacts on their ability to develop ideas and understanding. Younger pupils, for example, spoke enthusiastically about the reading passport scheme. Pupils write fluently and at length in a wide range of subject areas; they are able to construct well thought-through arguments that are maturely articulated in drama, classics and English. They are able to discuss emotional, social and ethical issues intelligently, for example whilst planning a design project for the disabled. Articulate and in-depth discussions were observed in an English lesson for the oldest pupils on *A Streetcar Named Desire* and in a history debate on twentieth century American reconstruction. Pupils in the middle of the school spoke eloquently and passionately about dystopian literature. Pupils are able to articulate effectively the detail of design ideas and the development of their modelling both through dynamic discussions with their teacher and through strong drawing and graphics skills.
- 3.13 Pupils demonstrate excellent numeracy skills, which they use with confidence across a range of subjects, for example in science, design and technology and business studies, where pupils were observed calculating the revenues, costs and profits of a firm, and in art, when they created portraits working with grids, ratio and proportion. A cross-curricular approach in science enables pupils to make connections with what they have learned in mathematics and the study skills element of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) allows them to make similar connections across different curriculum areas. Many pupils are very skilled in using a variety of ICT packages across a range of different subjects, for example collaborative software to organise, share and edit notes, or presentation software to enhance their independent learning. When they are encouraged to use technology in the classroom and beyond, pupils are very open to its practical benefits.
- 3.14 Inspectors found strong evidence of progression in the ability to analyse and evaluate as pupils move through the school and undertake more research-based enquiry work, culminating in the exceptionally high-quality output produced by pupils submitting Extended Project Qualifications. Pupils are able to develop their study skills through innovative programmes that encourage them to think for themselves, for example the *Independent Learning Independent Curiosity* (ILIC) and *Habits of Mind* initiatives, which have been introduced to ensure the inclusion of higher level skills in the curriculum at an earlier age. Boarders say that they find supervised prep a useful discipline that helps enable them to develop the ability to concentrate for sustained periods, as well as a useful opportunity to seek extra support from teaching staff and collaborate with their peers.
- 3.15 The vast majority of parents and pupils agree that the school provides a good choice of extra-curricular activities. Pupils consistently perform to a very high level in an extremely wide range of sports, supported by excellent coaching and facilities and a staff who are willing to give freely of their time to enable team players and individual sportsmen to achieve at a very high level. The Combined Cadet Force attracts a high number of pupils, who successfully compete in national drill and shooting competitions, and boys who participate in climbing gain nationally recognised awards. Much success is achieved in national academic competitions in subject areas ranging from science and mathematics to the arts and design and technology. Pupils achieve excellent results in debating, subject olympiads, Arkwright Scholarships and national essay competitions. In Years 7 to 9, a number of pupils participate successfully in a bush craft course designed by the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.16 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.17 In accordance with its aims and strong ethos based on Christian values, the school helps pupils to become well-grounded individuals who are considerate and respectful. Because personal development is successfully embedded in the curriculum and central to what the school and boarding communities aim to achieve, pupils demonstrate high levels of self-knowledge, self-confidence and resilience. Almost all parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their child's personal development.
- 3.18 In class, pupils collaborate very enthusiastically and effectively to solve problems and achieve tasks. Senior boys do all they can to help younger pupils, for example as reading or peer mentors, or by presenting talks and workshops on pastoral matters such as anti-bullying. They demonstrate excellent teamwork, particularly when it comes to representing their school or their house, which they do with great pride across a range of sporting, academic, cultural and other activities.
- 3.19 Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, take responsibility for their own learning and understand how to improve their academic performance, supported by helpful feedback from their teachers, with whom they have a warm rapport. They know their own strengths and weaknesses and are confident enough to ask their teachers or peers for help when they need it. They are willing to take risks and make mistakes as part of the learning process and show an openness when engaging with adults. Intellectual curiosity is strongly promoted and pupils show great perseverance in solving problems and responding to challenges, encouraged by an environment where individual success and enterprise are fostered and celebrated. Pupils demonstrate great empathy, gentleness and generosity of spirit, for example in their willingness to respect each other's views when discussing topics in lessons.
- 3.20 Pupils respond very positively to opportunities for quiet reflection, for example in tutor periods and chapel, though some questioned the relevance of the content of chapel services. They engage happily in discussion on philosophical issues and ethical dilemmas. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors testified to their enjoyment of the philosophy and ethics course and say how much they enjoy attending Junior Christian Union, because it develops their spiritual understanding and ability to reflect on the non-material aspects of life. Their aesthetic appreciation of the arts is very strong. Pupils exhibit a deep compassion, as evidenced by their response to visits to historical sites with a special spiritual significance, for example Auschwitz, the battlefields of the First World War and the Holocaust museum. Pupils demonstrate a genuine sense of awe when they contemplate the world around them, as observed, for example, in a chemistry practical lesson on mixtures and compounds.
- 3.21 There is a very strong sense of community in the school, particularly in the boarding houses, and pupils are noticeably proud of this strong family atmosphere. They enjoy each other's company and there is a clear sense of camaraderie around the campus. Pupils are kind and respectful to one another, showing a marked ability to listen to each other and negotiate. They have excellent manners. Pupils are very tolerant and accepting of those from different backgrounds and cultures, recognising the value of a diverse community, as a result of which overseas pupils in the boarding houses are quickly integrated into the community. This desire to know more about different cultures is fed by a rich and varied programme of cultural visits and exchanges, as well as visiting speakers. For example, pupils have enjoyed foreign language exchanges to Russia, Germany, France and Spain.
- 3.22 Pupils are prepared to take bold decisions about the direction of their future studies and potential career path, and are helped in this by a strong network of advice and support from tutors and senior staff and a Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme that is designed to prepare pupils to make choices. For example, pupils recognise alternatives to more traditional higher education routes and are not afraid to take this option. Pupils make valuable contributions to school and house councils, taking sensible decisions that enhance their community. With the encouragement and support of house tutors, boarders learn to become organised, independent, responsible and self-disciplined.

- 3.23 Pupils have a strong awareness of and respect for health and safety and how it impacts on their everyday lives. For example, in class, they carry out practical work carefully and safely and they know how to stay safe online. They understand not only the value of opportunities to develop new skills and interests, but also the importance of keeping busy and active for their general wellbeing. The school monitors pupils' involvement so that, although they participate in an exceptionally wide range of activities, they are able to achieve a sensible balance between their academic commitments and what they do to relax. Pupils take their diet and exercise regime very seriously, making informed and sensible choices about how to stay healthy and fit. The school has recently introduced a counselling service which further strengthens the pupils' sense of well-being and security.
- 3.24 Pupils show high levels of integrity. Their behaviour around school and in the classroom is extremely ordered. They respect and trust the school's code of conduct and understand and accept the school's high expectations and attendant sanctions.
- 3.25 Pupils have a very well developed sense of social responsibility, with a clear understanding of the value of helping those less fortunate than themselves. They undertake a great deal of work in the wider community and enjoy serving others, whether through giving blood, visiting local primary schools and care homes or taking part in litter picks. Pupils take fund-raising and charity work very seriously, supporting a number of national and local charities which are close to their heart. Pupils show great commitment, efficiency and maturity as they undertake a number of leadership roles, for example as Year 11 prefects, school and house prefects, peer mentors and school council representatives. They perform these roles conscientiously, understanding the commitment they have made to the school community and taking the opportunity this gives them to develop not only their leadership skills, but also their self-esteem.

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. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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

Mr Stephen Fox	Reporting inspector
Mrs Nina Gunson	Compliance team inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Fiona Angel	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Mark Hoskins	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Phillipa Message	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Dr James Whitehead	Team inspector (Head master, HMC school)
Mr Keith Metcalfe	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)