



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

St Gabriel's School

November 2019



Contents

Contents	2
School's Details	3
1. Background Information	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection	5
Preface	5
Key findings	6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	7
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	7
The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage	8
Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision	8
Quality of education	8
Behaviour and attitudes	9
Personal development	9
Leadership and management	10
Compliance with statutory requirements	11
Recommendation for further improvement	11
3. Educational Quality Inspection	12
Preface	12
Key findings	13
Recommendation	13
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements	13
The quality of the pupils' personal development	16
4. Inspection Evidence	19

School's Details

School	St Gabriel's School			
DfE number	869/6004			
Early Years registration number	EY482888			
Registered charity number	1062748			
Address	St Gabriel's School Sandleford Priory Newbury Berkshire RG20 9BD			
Telephone number	01635 555680			
Email address	info@stgabriels.co.uk			
Principal	Mr Ricki Smith			
Chair of governors	Mr Nigel Garland			
Age range	6 months to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	395			
	EYFS	91	Juniors	118
	Seniors	160	Sixth Form	26
Inspection dates	05 to 07 November 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Gabriel's School is an independent co-educational day school, for pupils between the ages of 6 months to 11 years, who attend the junior school. It is registered as a single-sex school for female pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 years, who attend the senior school.
- 1.2 Founded in 1929 by the Sisters of the Order of Jesus The Good Shepherd, the school moved to its current site at Sandlesford Priory in 1948. The sisters handed over control of the school in 1974. It is a registered charity, overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, a new leadership group has been established and the governors' education committee has been reinstated. The junior school has been restructured with a nursery now open for 50 weeks a year.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide a balanced academic education within the framework of a safe, secure and happy Christian environment. It seeks to make education a challenging and positive experience, where pupils are successful, acquire confidence and self-esteem, ready to meet the challenges of the outside world.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of business and professional backgrounds living within a radius of 20 miles of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the senior school and sixth form is above average. The junior school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is broadly above average. The school has identified 66 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which includes dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism spectrum disorders. Of these, 34 receive additional specialist help. Two pupils have educational, health and care (EHC) plans. English is an additional language (EAL) for 18 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The school has identified 27 pupils as being the most able within the school and the curriculum is modified for them, as well as for a further 75 pupils who are identified as having special talents in sport and the creative arts.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

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

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the 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 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2017 to 2018, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2017 to 2018 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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 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.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] 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 pupils' 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.

2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] 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.

2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is 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.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is 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.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.21 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.22 Leaders and providers are highly effective in their planning and designing of the curriculum, and their comprehensive monitoring practices ensure that it is implemented effectively. Since the previous inspection practitioners have been trained, and have applied, baby-led weaning in order to support babies in this important phase of development. A large outdoor sandpit has also been constructed allowing children to develop their gross motor skills while digging and building.
- 2.23 Practitioners' outstanding knowledge of how children learn and develop ensures that the delivery of the curriculum is highly effective and supports all children. The excellent curriculum and care practices meet the needs of the range of all children who attend, particularly children with SEND.
- 2.24 All children make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Most children meet or exceed age-related expectations in all areas of learning.
- 2.25 Children display high levels of emotional security and form strong and positive attachments with their key persons. Their personal and emotional development is excellent, and children consistently demonstrate that they feel safe, secure and happy.
- 2.26 All requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met and are monitored rigorously by the leaders and managers. All practitioners have a clear understanding of how to protect children and a deeply, embedded culture of shared responsibility for children's safeguarding and welfare.
- 2.27 Leadership and management are highly effective in their provision and support for all children. They have an excellent knowledge of the EYFS learning requirements as well as a shared vision for the future. They are rigorous in evaluating practice and securing continuous development that improves children's education.

Quality of education

- 2.28 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 2.29 High-quality educational programmes, appropriate for all children's ages and abilities, are rigorously overseen by leadership and management. Thorough monitoring of the highly effective planning practices ensures that leaders are confident that the setting's curriculum intentions are met and are sufficiently challenging.
- 2.30 Practitioners' excellent knowledge of how children learn and develop ensures that the content, sequencing and progression in the areas of learning are secured. Carefully tailored activities, planned with a deep understanding of the needs and interests of all children, support and challenge them in making excellent progress in relation to their starting points. For example practitioners challenged toddlers' problem-solving skills by asking them how they might join some more bricks together and then encouraged them to keep trying until they succeeded. Children are motivated and keen to have a go at new activities and solve problems, which enables them to be effective learners. Practitioners very effective use of observations and assessments ensures that every child's learning is carefully monitored, and next steps are clearly identified and planned for.

2.31 The well-designed environment provides all children with excellent opportunities to choose from high-quality resources and so consolidate and deepen their knowledge and skills. Tailored opportunities ensure they make excellent progress as they are prepared for future success, such as when young children develop their fine motor skills by pushing cars on a track. All children, including those with SEND and EAL, benefit from shared experiences and rich learning programmes especially in the areas of language and communication. For example when practitioners engage in routine activities such as cleaning the table after breakfast, they involve the children in tasks, offering commentary relating to their actions, which encourages the children to take an interest and join in. However, practitioners do not always make the most of the everyday activities to incorporate mathematical language to fully enrich children's understanding and mathematical development.

Behaviour and attitudes

2.32 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.

2.33 Children demonstrate a high level of engagement enabling them to be successful learners. The toddlers are curious as they press buttons to make music or make lights flash and offer their own commentary whilst deeply immersed in imaginative play. They explore indoors and outdoors, playing with what they know and demonstrating a keen willingness to have a go at new activities. As they handle books, they are fully engaged in pointing to the pictures and turning the pages. The babies demonstrate an eagerness to explore as they see how different autumn leaves float down.

2.34 Children are active learners who are highly motivated to join in a range of activities. Babies demonstrate confidence as they crawl up the ramp to go from outside to inside and are delighted with their success when they achieve what they set out to do. Positive attitudes are evident as toddlers persevere in using their zips to do up their coats. They concentrate extremely well as they choose a push-along walker and steer carefully around blocks. Three older babies sustain high levels of concentration and involvement as they explore a basket of bricks, take them out independently and show them to each other.

2.35 Children consistently demonstrate that they can create and think critically, have their own ideas, and choose ways to do things. Toddlers make links as they recognise their photograph and recreate breakfast time with pretend food. They know their likes and dislikes, can communicate their needs as they choose which song to sing, and confidently decide which breakfast cereal to eat. As they access resources, children have clear ideas about what they want to play with and show high levels of independence in their choices.

2.36 The setting has a highly effective partnership with parents which successfully promotes children's attendance. Children enthusiastically arrive at the setting and, as they happily leave their carer, they manage their feelings well, showing they are emotionally secure. Children respond with enthusiasm to familiar routines, particularly at the start of each day. Their excellent behaviour and attitudes are demonstrated by their willingness to be part of a group, follow instructions and concentrate for extended periods, during registration and singing time. Children confidently engage in their learning, form good habits for the future, and feel safe, secure and happy.

Personal development

2.37 The personal development of children is outstanding.

2.38 Care practices are highly effective in supporting and promoting children's emotional security and the development of their character. As children wake from their sleep, practitioners offer a secure environment, talking gently to them. Each key person's excellent knowledge of their children's unique needs ensures they know how to respond effectively.

2.39 Practitioners affirm good sharing as children interact together, enabling their confidence and self-esteem to grow. They encourage resilience as they gently hold the hands of a child learning to walk and encourage independence as children take their first steps.

- 2.40 Practitioners are highly effective when encouraging babies to take appropriate risks as they learn, such as climbing and balancing on blocks. They know each child's needs and interests and plan a variety of excellent activities to support their physical and emotional health. All children are happy, safe and secure as a result of the high-quality provision.
- 2.41 Well-established systems, including the excellent key person system, promote children's independence and well-being. Practitioners respond extremely warmly to babies as they reach out to gain reassurance. The key person 'buddy' system when staff are absent, ensures that the setting is highly effective in enabling children to form secure attachments at all times.
- 2.42 Children are encouraged to be physically active both inside and outdoors, with outdoor provision timetabled throughout the day. High-quality resources encourage climbing and balancing, and support the development of fine and gross motor skills. A healthy diet is provided each day and practitioners ensure that food preferences and allergy needs are well provided for.
- 2.43 Practitioners enable children to gain an effective understanding of when they might be at risk. Parents are informed about the setting's use of tailored resources to keep children safe. Children are taught about the need to play safely.
- 2.44 Practitioners have an excellent knowledge of policies and procedures which are implemented stringently. Appropriate staff training is provided, including safeguarding and paediatric first aid. Sleeping children are regularly checked, first aid provision is robust, and attendance is carefully registered. A rigorous induction process is in place for all new staff. The setting meets the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare, learning and development and all practitioners are fully aware of their responsibilities.
- 2.45 Hygiene practices are rigorous and meet the personal needs of all children. Practitioners encourage children to manage their own personal needs. Younger children become increasingly independent as they wash their hands, as do older children, as they dress themselves.
- 2.46 Practitioners are highly effective in preparing children for life in modern Britain by enabling them to make decisions and follow rules. As they encourage them to share and take turns, children learn to respect and care for one another. Children celebrate a variety of British festivals, such as Bonfire Night, as well as those from other cultures. French children benefit from the support of a practitioner fluent in French, and, as children play with dolls and food representing different cultures, they gain an understanding of diverse needs.

Leadership and management

- 2.47 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 2.48 Leaders and managers at all levels demonstrate an ambitious vision for future development. They realise this through shared values, policy and practice, evaluating and planning together to provide high quality inclusive care and education for all children. Both recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully implemented. Children now benefit from the security of a 'buddy' key person.
- 2.49 Professional development is highly effective with many opportunities for practitioners to develop their skills. This builds knowledge over time and translates into improvements in teaching which has a highly positive impact on the children's outcomes. For example, the use of more open-ended questions enables children to develop their thinking skills.
- 2.50 High quality individual meetings sessions are provided for all practitioners, and systems are securely in place to ensure that all staff are supported. Their well-being is extremely important to leaders and managers.
- 2.51 Leaders ensure that all children, including those with SEND and EAL, as well the more able, are extremely well supported. Thorough systems are in place to ensure every child's needs are met.

- 2.52 Leaders and managers are highly effective in engaging with children, their parents and others in the community, including local services. Leaders provide a variety of opportunities for children to care for those less fortunate by raising money for charities. Results from the questionnaire show that parents are extremely happy with the care and education provided by the setting.
- 2.53 The needs of the setting are well known and understood by the school governors who are highly effective in holding leaders and managers to account for the quality of care and education. Resources are managed sustainably, effectively and efficiently. Leaders rigorously fulfil all their statutory duties in relation to their oversight and monitoring of the registered EYFS. They fully comply with statutory duties; for example, under the Equality Act 2010 and other duties and in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.54 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Strengthen children's understanding and use of mathematical language so that they can apply it to their everyday activities.

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 excellent knowledge and understanding across their subject areas and throughout the school.
- Pupils have high aspirations for themselves and work hard to achieve their ambitions.
- Pupils are very articulate and confident communicators in their lessons.
- Pupils display very effective collaborative skills in their learning but equally are excellent as independent learners and regularly take initiative in their studies.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their work throughout the school within a very positive and supportive environment.

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

- Pupils display extremely high levels of self-confidence without any sense of arrogance.
- Pupils have a strong appreciation of those non-material elements of life and understand the importance of giving themselves time to reflect on their day.
- Pupils are very aware of their responsibilities as citizens and the need to support each other and those in the wider community.
- Pupils are very respectful of others and understand the need to treat everyone equally, which in turn gives them strength of confidence within this supportive and inclusive community.

Recommendation

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

- Developing further the competence and confidence of pupils in the senior school in their use of technology across all subjects.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 The school successfully meets its aim of enabling pupils to develop their full potential and to make education a positive experience in which pupils achieve success and develop confidence and self-esteem. At all stages in the school, pupils make excellent progress in terms of their attainment. At both GCSE and A level, pupils achieve above the national average and make excellent progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, as evidenced by the school's data analysis systems which compares attainment with ability. Children in the EYFS make excellent progress over time, particularly in mathematics, communication and literacy, as seen in their workbooks. Pupils in the junior school make very strong progress as seen in the scrutiny of work undertaken on inspection. This achievement is enabled by the excellent support from regular marking with useful comments and the careful monitoring of pupils' progress over the years by the school's leaders, thus meeting the recommendation from a previous inspection. Evidence from their results shows that pupils with SEND and those identified as the more able, all make strong progress and exceed expectations.

- 3.6 Pupils display very high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across the school, enabled by effective teaching. They involve themselves fully in lessons and are keen to develop their ideas and grasp of concepts, as seen in a wide range of lesson observations. Senior school pupils demonstrate extremely strong mathematical and scientific skills, such as in a biology lesson where they independently created their own hypotheses for the experiment they were about to complete. Pupils are able to make excellent links between prior work and current topics and indeed from other subjects, as observed in an A-level English lesson where pupils made perceptive connections between different texts that they had studied over the two years. In a senior school history lesson, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding to a high level, drawing on previous learning and extending this further, showing convincing analytical skills. In the junior school, pupils demonstrate a high level of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum, as observed in a geography lesson where pupils researched and applied their knowledge to create templates for their study of mountains. In the EYFS, children use their knowledge, skills and understanding extremely well during a variety of activities and lessons. Pupils all through the school show excellent creative skills, as seen in the high quality of artwork on display throughout the school.
- 3.7 Pupils are very articulate and are excellent communicators in lessons, producing written work of high quality. They are good listeners and confidently contribute to lesson discussion. Pupils use sophisticated vocabulary and clearly understand the complexities of language, as observed in a variety of lessons through the school. In English a junior class wrote acrostic poems about fireworks and during the ensuing discussion of ideas, some pupils explained complex concepts successfully, such as alliteration and similes, which they then used effectively in their work. Throughout the junior school, pupils demonstrate very good listening skills and respond readily to instructions. They are articulate in expressing their own views, and discussions with pupils confirm that many have a passion for reading. The quality of written work seen in lessons and in the scrutiny of books indicates that it is of a high standard. In the senior school, pupils make the most of a wide range of public speaking opportunities and display excellent communication skills. They have strong opinions on many topics and articulate them extremely effectively, routinely using higher level concepts and vocabulary. In a drama lesson, pupils used a vast range of descriptive vocabulary in their study of *“Hamlet”* and created their own monologues successfully. Children in the EYFS, make excellent progress in their communication skills, especially in their work with sounds, competently using their knowledge and understanding to decode words when reading and writing.
- 3.8 Pupils have excellent numeracy skills throughout the school and confidently use their knowledge across a range of subjects, such as in a geography lesson where they used numeric data to analyse employment patterns. Pupils are extremely competent in applying their numeric understanding, such as data logging in an A-level physics lesson, where they successfully calculated the rate of change of energy. They produce a high standard of work all through the school. Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of number, as observed in a GCSE mathematics lesson where, during discussion, they took genuine pleasure in developing their theories on quadratic equations. In the junior school, pupils have a high degree of competency and are confident in applying their knowledge to solve unfamiliar problems, as seen in a lesson on fractions. Pupils throughout the junior school articulate and explain their understanding and are challenged to do so by staff.
- 3.9 Senior school pupils have a good grasp of information communication technology (ICT) and, at times, use these skills effectively in their lessons, thus developing their expertise further. However, during discussions, a few senior pupils commented that they did not use ICT regularly enough in lessons which hindered the development of their competencies. This view was also supported in inspection evidence from lesson observations. Junior school pupils display excellent skills and enjoy working with different programmes to research ideas and produce excellent presentations of their own, as observed when pupils created their own videos. Younger pupils proudly demonstrated the presentations they had made on their tablets, showing significant success and a secure understanding of the process. Children in Reception enjoy using the technology to inspire their learning.

- 3.10 Pupils of all ages are highly self-reliant workers, setting themselves ambitious challenges. They can confidently discuss their ideas in an environment where they feel comfortable and are not afraid of making mistakes, understanding that this is often an effective way of learning and making progress. This view of education is one espoused by the school's leaders and governors and fully supported by teaching. Pupils in the junior school are taught to use a variety of techniques to improve their learning outcomes and report that they find this helpful and effective. This was seen in an English lesson where pupils explained that it was important not to rush their work because this would lead to mistakes. There is a common thread throughout the school with pupils taking responsibility for their learning, evidenced through their successful involvement in the research-based qualifications undertaken in the senior school, where some projects seen, were of the highest quality. In a senior classical civilization lesson, pupils showed excellent research skills, using a range of different sources, to make comparisons between "Hercules" and "Achelous".
- 3.11 Pupils benefit significantly from the breadth of activities beyond the classroom and consequently learn a range of new skills both in terms of specific individual achievements and in elements such as teamwork and perseverance. They achieve regional and national success in sport and there are many examples of strong team achievement, such as the equestrian team's regular success in competitions. Additionally, senior school pupils regularly achieve high level success in national competitions, as diverse as debating, robotics, drama and notably, company of the year in the Young Enterprise competition 2019. Junior school pupils also achieve highly in many areas outside of the classroom and appreciate that this enables them to develop as rounded individuals. The netball team were national finalists last year and Year 6 pupils won a regional competition on home-building. Pupils cite in interview, that they feel success in these areas has a positive effect on achieving success in their work. Pupils are proud of their achievements and readily gave examples of personal strengths and interests which they have developed at school as a result of the breadth of the curricular and extra-curricular provision.
- 3.12 Pupils are very focused in their approach to learning. They work successfully on their own but clearly enjoy working together and gain greater understanding as a result of their excellent collaborative approach. There is an excellent rapport between pupils and staff in the classroom and this enables pupils to make the most of their learning and achieve success. In the EYFS, children's attitudes to learning are extremely high. They are eager to learn, independent and show enthusiasm for every aspect of their learning. They express their own opinions confidently. Junior school pupils have a very positive attitude to learning and are equally effective working on their own initiative, in pairs, or as members of a larger group. Senior school pupils show strong levels of initiative in their learning, as observed in an A-level lesson where they confidently discussed the changes to Parliament during the Reformation and effectively directed the course of the lesson. In all their learning, pupils are encouraged to become more skilful through the effectiveness of the teaching which provides the opportunities to take responsibility, in keeping with the ethos and approach promoted by the school's leaders.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils display an outstanding level of self-awareness and use this to great effect in their learning and development as individuals. They are confident young people and were eager to talk about their school during inspection interviews. Children in the EYFS, have an excellent understanding and acceptance of themselves, confidently initiating conversations with visitors. They persevere extremely positively during their chosen activities and take risks to succeed. Junior school pupils display high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. They have considerable insight on how to enhance their own learning. Senior school pupils are reflective and demonstrate maturity by committing extra time and effort to enhancing their work where appropriate. All pupils show great resilience by consistently engaging with their teachers and taking charge of their learning. During a house meeting, form captains spoke with tremendous confidence, displaying an excellent level of maturity by involving both their peers and staff in the meeting discussion. Pupils of all ages are extremely well prepared for the next stage in life by the school's leaders, in tandem with the teaching. Pupils greatly value the induction processes, which ensure that they have a secure understanding about expectations as they transfer between school sections.
- 3.15 Pupils in the senior school fully understand the importance of making decisions for themselves; they show considerable maturity during discussions on how they are planning their future, such as the importance of their decisions when they are making subject choices for examinations or university applications and deciding on career options. In the EYFS, children competently select resources and make their own decisions about their learning, because teaching provides many opportunities for children to make choices. Further up the school, junior pupils spoke sensibly about choosing their school council and why this was an important decision to make. Pupils in interview said that they feel well-supported by staff, who encourage them to take ownership of their learning and to evaluate their progress. For example, in a GCSE mathematics lesson, pupils assessed their own level of confidence for the topic they were studying and then were given a task appropriate to that level.
- 3.16 Pupils have an extremely strong sense of awareness of the non-material elements of life in the school and embrace this fully. They understand the need at times to take the opportunity to reflect on their lives, often developing their own set of beliefs. This is promoted by an understated, but palpable attitude within the school, of the importance for pupils having this time to think. Pupils recognise the value of giving themselves this opportunity within their busy days. This thoughtful approach to life has given them additional strengths in their learning, as observed in a Year 8 lesson, where pupils explored perceptively a passage from "*Great Expectations*" and made an interesting comparison between the key theme of melancholy and another image of the light fading, suggesting that both inferred abandonment. Children in the EYFS expressed awe and wonder at the changing colours of the autumn leaves, as they came falling down. Pupils in the Junior School engage fully in collective acts of worship and celebrating religious festivals from various faith traditions, thus enhancing their understanding of how people across the world have different beliefs that are so important in their lives.

- 3.17 All pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and understand the importance of rules and structures. The level of behaviour throughout the school is exemplary and reflects the school's inclusivity and the strength of relationships between pupils and staff. Junior school pupils spoke confidently about the school's systems of rewards and sanctions; they understood how they worked, what the reasoning behind the rules is and how they felt these were effective in creating a safe environment in which they could work and play successfully. During discussions all pupils expressed a desire to behave well and accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Senior pupils are eager to support and celebrate the school's values, which they clearly understand promotes a successful community. In a gymnastics activity, pupils from both the junior and senior schools evinced a strong sense of responsibility for their conduct, respecting safety rules by lining up, whilst others took turns, walking in prescribed areas and behaving in a way that would not distract others. Clear communication from teachers, about both positive and negative behaviour supports the high standards of moral awareness throughout the school.
- 3.18 Pupils are very aware of the needs of their peers and seek to support each other in an excellent manner. The children in the EYFS take turns, share and care for each other's needs extremely well. Pupils in the junior school demonstrate excellent skills of collaborative working, such as exchanging ideas very successfully during 'think, pair, share' activities; they are extremely keen to help each other. During a mathematics lesson, younger pupils were observed sharing coloured pencils with their friends in order to facilitate successful outcomes for an activity that needed specific colours to be used. Senior school pupils exhibit very high levels of social development and collaboration. During interview, GCSE pupils spoke in very mature fashion on how they realised now that they influenced their relationships with other people by the decisions they took and that minor disagreements were not significant in comparison to the value of maintaining lasting friendships. The small nature of the school means that pupils feel as though they have a voice. The school council is a highly effective vehicle for this communication and pupils consider that their suggestions are valued and acted on by school leaders, such the recent changes to food options at lunchtime. The house system is an excellent example of pupils co-operating successfully, as observed during pupils' preparation for the house music competition. Senior pupils led the way in this and show exemplary qualities in organising the event.
- 3.19 Pupils take a strong interest in the world outside the school gates and work hard to help those less privileged than themselves. Junior school pupils show a high level of social conscience, as exemplified when they spoke about raising money for the NSPCC, stating: "we want to help children who are not as lucky as we are". Junior pupils have also donated their hair to a charity, to make wigs for people who had suffered loss of hair through illness. Discussions with pupils confirm that they take positions of responsibility and leadership roles extremely seriously. Such cohesion clearly benefits all the members of the school community and demonstrates a strong commitment to working together for the common good. Senior school pupils also show an excellent attitude towards supporting other people, recognising this as an integral part of being good citizens. This is promoted by the school's ethos and aims, driven by the leaders and supported fully by staff. As part of this, pupils are engaged actively in community projects, volunteering in local primary schools and care homes. They also engage in significant fundraising for a wide range of charities, broadening their understanding of the wider world, such as preparing a world challenge expedition to Vietnam to support community projects.

- 3.20 Pupils show genuine respect for all individuals within their community and there is a strong sense of appreciation for other cultures. The school has a strong inclusive ethos and pupils gain considerable confidence from this environment. In this respect, pupils follow the example set by the school's leaders and staff. There is not a significant ethnic diversity in the school, but this does not stop pupils learning and understanding the needs of other cultures through assemblies and lessons. Pupils, in a senior school Spanish lesson, discussed the "*Day of the Dead*" and displayed an excellent understanding of its significance in Hispanic culture and the cultural differences between this and other celebrations such as Christmas. Pupils in a GCSE religious studies lesson, used nuanced, neutral language in discussing world problems, showing cultural and religious sensitivity. One of the world problems raised by pupils was sexism, demonstrating their full awareness of the potential for discrimination. The recent creation of a group in the senior school, focusing on issues of diversity is a further sign of the respect they have for everyone in their community.
- 3.21 Pupils understand fully the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to achieve this. Children in the EYFS have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, especially about choosing healthy food and taking exercise. The provision of healthy food and specific teaching approaches enables children to make good choices about keeping healthy. Junior school pupils are also very aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles. During discussion, they spoke about sport offering a chance to exercise and have fun and said that in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, they learn about healthy eating and how to choose a good balance of foods; pupils show a very good understanding of the issues. Senior school pupils spoke confidently about how they keep themselves safe online. All pupils felt extremely well-supported by their teachers and the wider school community, as well as through visiting speakers augmenting the messages delivered through their PSHE lessons. The extensive nature of the school buildings and grounds, when added to the close community, combine to foster an environment in which all pupils can flourish. Pupils greatly appreciate the guidance from staff to develop their good health and physical well-being both in sports' lessons and in clubs. Pupils were also very aware of the importance of emotional health and the need to protect this. The presence of sixth form pupils, who act as peer mentors, is regarded as a strength by pupils, ensuring an excellent support network for these needs. Overall, the level of pastoral care in the school is exemplary and this is central in creating the happy and secure environment which is a significant feature of St Gabriel's and fully in line with the school's aims and ethos.

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 house and form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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

Mr Gareth Price	Reporting inspector
Mrs Gillian Cross	Compliance team inspector
Mr Alex Balls	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Michael Connolly	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Dr Mary Plint	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Paul Vanni	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Co-ordinating inspector for early years
Mrs Anne Oliver	Team inspector for EYFS (Deputy head, IAPS school)