



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**FOCUSED COMPLIANCE AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION REPORTS**

**BALLARD SCHOOL**

**NOVEMBER 2017**



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**SCHOOL'S DETAILS**

<b>School</b>	Ballard School			
<b>DfE number</b>	850/6012			
<b>EYFS number</b>	EY311188			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	307328			
<b>Address</b>	Ballard School Fernhill Lane New Milton Hampshire BH25 5SU			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01425 626900			
<b>Email address</b>	headmaster@ballardschool.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Alastair Reid			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Peter Goodfellow			
<b>Age range</b>	1 to 16			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	401			
	<b>Boys</b>	202	<b>Girls</b>	199
	<b>Day pupils</b>	401	<b>EYFS</b>	47
	<b>Seniors</b>	257	<b>Juniors</b>	97
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21 to 23 November 2017			

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Ballard School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 1 and 16. Academically non-selective, the school has a strong learning support department and a distinctive performing arts focus. The school is an educational charitable trust managed by a board of governors. There has been a change of Chair of Governors since the last inspection. Set in a rural location, the school has developed from an amalgamation of schools, the most recent being in 1995. There is no boarding or Sixth Form.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 Ballard School aims to provide a supportive environment for learning, based on Christian values and excellent teaching, designed to ensure all pupils achieve their personal best. The high academic standards aimed for, together with preparation for future education, are underpinned by an ethos of concern for others, and an awareness of the rights and duties of a good citizen. The diverse range of activities and broad curriculum seek to nurture the self-confidence of all the pupils, and help their personal development, engendering lifelong interests and stimulating a desire to serve the community.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 114 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), hearing impairment, Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) and Tourette's Syndrome, 90 of whom receive additional specialist help. Two 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 four pupils, whose needs are supported by specialist teachers. The school has identified a number of pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them. Individual programmes are provided for pupils because of their special talents in sport, performing arts and academic specialisms.

## 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](#), [The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

## 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 2014 to 2016, performance has been above the national average for 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.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is 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 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**

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 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**

- 2.12 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.

**2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.14 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.

**2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.16 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.

**2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] are met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.18 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.

**2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] are met.**

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 2.20 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.21 The setting provides a supportive and caring environment for learning, putting children first in accordance with the school's aims. Children make good progress relative to their starting points because staff accurately plan the next steps for learning based on regular assessments, personal interests and individual needs. Key persons know their children and their families very well and ensure that the children feel safe and happy. Staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities for safeguarding the children in their care and robust systems are in place to ensure that children are well cared for and that staff work with parents to ensure that emotional and welfare needs are fully met. Staff constantly review their practice and set realistic targets for continued improvement. Since the last inspection, outside areas have been further developed, and problem-solving techniques have been a focus for staff training.

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.22 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.23 Staff across the setting work cohesively to realise their vision to set high aspirations for every child within a secure and inclusive community. Generous levels of staffing ensure that standards of care are high and that each child follows a personalised learning programme, informed by a robust system of observations.
- 2.24 Rigorous monitoring of academic standards through lesson observations, tracking of pupil progress and effective systems for feedback ensure that staff performance is constantly developed and learning experiences for the children enhanced. Appraisal systems identify both personal and school targets for staff which are supported by appropriate training. Regular supervision sessions and weekly team meetings for staff to discuss their key children result in a very high level of pastoral care.
- 2.25 Highly effective ongoing systems for self-evaluation ensure that the views of all members of the school community contribute to the continued development of the setting. The embedded ethos of reflective practice, for example reviewing each lesson to ensure that key factors have been addressed, helps ensure that best practice is adopted. The views of parents are frequently sought, for example a questionnaire to evaluate the success of parent training sessions was used to select topics for future events. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and comments in interviews during the inspection, parents expressed their overwhelming support for the setting. They particularly appreciate the high levels of personal care for their children and the many opportunities for the whole family to be involved in the life of the school.
- 2.26 Learning programmes are carefully planned to meet the statutory requirements of the EYFS, covering the prime and specific areas of learning and encompassing each child's personal interests. Individual progress against age related developmental goals is meticulously recorded in an Interactive Learning Diary which is used to plan the next steps and can be accessed by parents. Two year checks provide a further check on expected progress. A smooth transition to the next stage of learning is facilitated by the sharing of facilities, for example the dining room, and by effective transfer of records. The provision of weekly activity sessions for prospective pupils and their families allows a gentle introduction to the life of the school and reflects its commitment to share facilities with the local community.
- 2.27 Equality and diversity are actively promoted, demonstrating a strong commitment to engender a sense of individual responsibility for behaviour. Children are encouraged to share their ideas at circle

times and to take on roles of responsibility and have opportunities to experience wider cultural events.

- 2.28 Consistently rigorous adherence to school policies and a secure understanding of their responsibilities ensure that staff continually promote high standards of safety for each child, supported by attendance at regular training updates and refresher sessions. Suitable training in child protection sets guidelines to be followed if there are causes for concern and staff are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of radicalisation and extremism.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

- 2.29 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 2.30 High quality monitoring systems ensure that progress against age-related developmental goals is carefully tracked and that appropriate support or challenge is provided to ensure that the high expectations for each child are fully met, including those with EAL or SEND and the more able. Children are encouraged to do their best for example, standing on a step to try to add just one more brick to a tower before it topples!
- 2.31 Staff have a good understanding of the needs of their key children and ensure that they are familiar with future stages to inform preparation for transitions. They are keen to adopt fresh ideas and staff questionnaires aid the sharing of tried and tested strategies and provide support when new techniques are used.
- 2.32 The very clear instructions given by staff are a strong feature of the setting and even the youngest children pick up visual cues and respond appropriately. Teaching is carefully planned so that every child can access the curriculum and individual needs are fully met.
- 2.33 Detailed assessments on entry to the setting and meetings with parents accurately inform the starting points for each child. Parents share ongoing progress with staff and can access and contribute to their child's Interactive Learning Diary at any time. Progress against expected developmental goals is shared verbally every six weeks and in termly written reports. The two year progress check ensures that developmental goals are suitably met and support is provided if necessary. Excellent communication with staff ensure that parents are fully informed of their children's activities and progress.
- 2.34 Equality and diversity are promoted for example with stories read in other languages although during the inspection direct evidence for the use of artefacts to illustrate different cultures was not fully evident.
- 2.35 The youngest children benefit positively from the role modelling by older children, developing their language skills and learning to socialise. Familiarity with staff and sharing facilities across the school, for example the Sports Hall and Dining Room, ease transitions between year groups. Staff know the children very well and strong systems for the transfer of records and visits to the new rooms further facilitate transitions.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

- 2.36 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.37 Across the setting, children are happily engaged on their activities within a calm and purposeful working atmosphere, in which they are gently encouraged to do their best and praised for their successes. The youngest children respond with smiles at registration and follow the example of the older children by trying to greet the teacher. They confidently make independent choices of activity from the visual prompts provided, quietly guided by staff who are very aware of each child's needs. The many opportunities for free and imaginative play, often linked to topic work, allow children to explore their surroundings and further their own learning. Spontaneous responses to children's ideas engender a fresh and exciting environment, for example, after one child discovered the binoculars

and deciding that he could see a monster, the teacher found more binoculars for the children and led them on a monster hunt around the classroom, following up with free painting of the creatures they had seen.

- 2.38 Key persons know their children very well and build a close working relationship with parents, sharing information and responding to their wishes for their child's personal needs. Weekly meetings record any incidents and concerns, for example after an injury. The generous staffing ratios ensure that each child receives a personal welcome on arrival and is helped to settle in for the day. Children are encouraged to be independent, for example by learning to feed themselves at lunch time.
- 2.39 Prompt and regular attendance is expected and any unexplained absence swiftly followed up.
- 2.40 The youngest children respond very well to the methods of positive behaviour management adopted in preparation for the system used for older pupils. Staff model kind and thoughtful relationships which are reflected in the gentle and co-operative behaviour of the children observed across the setting.
- 2.41 Detailed risk assessments for all areas of the setting and careful supervision ensure the children's safety. Within this framework, children are encouraged to experiment and try new activities in line with the school's aim to engender a spirit of adventure. Guidelines for the use of social media are strictly adhered to and verbal guidance is given on how to keep safe. Parents are invited to a special child-friendly assembly about how children can keep safe in school and guidance on using the internet.
- 2.42 Embedded routines for personal hygiene ensure that children wash their hands frequently, including before and after meals. The variety of food on offer ensures that staff can make up a balanced lunch for each child. Catering staff take great care to address any food allergies or special requirements.

### **Outcomes for children**

- 2.43 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 2.44 Across the setting, pupils make at least expected progress from their carefully assessed starting points and many exceed age related expectations in the early learning goals. The youngest children make particular progress, for example developing their vocabulary by listening to their peers and responding to encouragement from home and from staff.
- 2.45 Regular observations and discussions between staff and parents ensure that children meet developmental goals. The youngest children develop good social skills in preparation for the next stage of their education as they learn to join in with older children, for example copying the actions for songs at circle time. They are happy to play independently, for example with puzzles or closely tracking cars as they run down a slope. They enjoy early mark making with crayons or chalk and demonstrate their developing ICT skills by scrolling across a screen to find the next picture in a sequence.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements**

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

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

- Provide further opportunities to celebrate diversity across the curriculum.

### 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 engage actively in accessing the wide range of learning opportunities that is made available to them within and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils have high levels of oral communication and presentation skills; they express their ideas and opinions clearly, coherently and with good humour.
- In music, drama, art and sport the pupils show outstanding levels of achievement strongly aided by the multitude of opportunities available to them.
- In some areas of the academic curriculum, the progress of more able pupils is slower when feedback is limited or challenges lack full rigour.

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

- Pupils are reflective, set high expectations of themselves and display confidence and resilience.
- Pupils eagerly and willingly give of their time and energy to help others within the community, especially those younger than themselves.
- Pupils appreciate the needs of others less fortunate than themselves and engage enthusiastically in charitable endeavours, both locally and internationally.
- Pupils display high levels of respect and empathy towards their peers and all members of the school community.

## Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Enable all pupils, particularly the more able, to identify the next steps in their learning by sharing best practice regarding target setting and feedback.'

## THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

3.5 The overall achievement of the pupils is excellent and in most areas represents successful fulfilment of the school's aims that each pupil achieves their personal best. Pupils make good progress in academic work throughout all phases of the school, when compared with pupils of similar ability, strongly assisted by a wide-ranging and thorough support system in the school. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make particularly strong progress. Some pupils make excellent progress because of the cordial relationships across the school community and the outstanding attention to the pastoral care of individuals. Pupils' learning is enhanced by teachers knowing their individual learning needs and making provision for them in terms of appropriate support strategies in class. The provision of clinics and enhanced learning spaces gives weaker pupils ample support and the opportunity to succeed. Well integrated into classes, SEND pupils participate as eagerly and make as much progress as their peers, because of the culture of celebrating abilities and what they can do, while understanding and mitigating the difficulties they have. More able pupils progress through challenges at their own level, such as extension exercises or through national project initiatives. Although most pupils respond to constructive verbal feedback in lessons, this sometimes results in a lack of written feedback and less detailed attention to the more able, thus limiting their progress. In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the youngest pupils successfully meet their learning targets because of the clear and focused support they receive from staff and the variety of teaching styles allows all the children to access the curriculum. Results in GCSE have been above

the national average for maintained schools with some students achieving excellent grades. Most pupils gain places of their choice for the next stage of their education.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge and understanding are good in many areas of the curriculum, and excellent in aesthetic subjects. They have well-developed skills and apply them from one area of learning to another. Participating in the 'Masterchef comes to Ballard' project, pupils showed good combined skills from other areas of the curriculum alongside food and nutrition, such as organisational ability, imagination, technical and numeracy skills all with much enthusiasm. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge in other contexts such as budget setting. Pupils used good humour and literacy techniques including rhetorical questions and metaphors in imaginative descriptive writing about the supposed advantages and challenges of sailing around the world with one's parents. In geography, pupils applied their knowledge of forces and convection currents to explain the movement of tectonic plates.
- 3.7 The school is successful in its aim to provide education that extends beyond the purely academic. The pupils' achievements in a wide range of pursuits such as art, music, drama and sport reflect the extensive range of their talents. Many excellent examples of pupils' artwork are on display around the school, demonstrating high quality skills in drawing, painting, three-dimensional modelling and ceramics. Strong knowledge and skills in drama and music, both choral and instrumental, were evident. For example, senior pupils learning to sing the bass and tenor parts in the chamber choir were sight-reading difficult pieces involving syncopation and jazz chords. The opportunities to participate in sporting activities are extensive and ensures that all pupils achieve personal success, as seen in the numerous successes achieved by school teams and individuals, at local and national level. Pupils who compete in sports such as swimming and skiing for local clubs or at county or higher level are well supported by the school. Individual programmes are provided by the school if extended leave of absence is required to enable high level competition or participation in filming or touring drama performances. The drama and other performing arts productions are valued features of school life and international choir tours also facilitate cultural and spiritual awareness in the pupils.
- 3.8 Pupils of all abilities and ages display strong oral communication skills. They express themselves confidently and effectively. They are articulate and listen attentively to the views and opinions of others. In a Year 9 debating activity, pupils made clear, coherent points about the merits of Donald Trump's presidency. Junior pupils share knowledge and understanding confidently within the classroom and beyond. For example, in science the pupils developed their ideas and hypothesised about the results of an experiment about dissolving. Communication skills are very well developed among the senior pupils. They are confident to offer oral answers without embarrassment in the classroom despite meeting unfamiliar content and are perfectly at ease with guests. They discuss their questions and ideas with each other and with their teachers to elicit the information required for the successful completion of the task in hand. In design technology, pupils effectively communicated their design ideas in sketches, diagrams and in writing. Pupils' learning is enhanced by wall displays of their work in classrooms providing inspiration and reference information. Pupils confidently use their understanding of foreign languages to speak in short sentences, aided in this through skilful teaching. Their confidence is strongly aided through the time provided for reflection and collaboration in class. Pupils' written communication is well developed, with more able senior pupils showing prowess in their written language work, writing lengthy passages using a variety of grammatical structures.
- 3.9 Pupils show a good grasp of mathematical concepts and methods. Strong skills involving mathematical calculations are evident. Pupils are not afraid to explore new ideas and apply their skills in other parts of the curriculum such as lines of best fit in science or in English, when a graph was used most originally as a way of communicating the level of tension in *An Inspector Calls* as the play progressed. In the EYFS children confidently used counting and numbers in an outdoor 'fishing' game. Junior pupils understand denominators and numerators in mathematics and use their mathematical skills with competence when designing chocolate moulds in design technology. Most

pupils attain good numeracy skills. In a statistics lesson on box and whisker graphs, progress was rapid with pupils demonstrating very strong thinking skills. However, a lack of momentum in some lessons limited progress, particularly for the more able.

- 3.10 Throughout the school, the pupils' use of information communication technology (ICT) during lessons is good. They use information technology routinely as an effective aid to learning. In chemistry, pupils deftly manage chemical equations, do calculations and organise their work using their laptops. Senior pupils are confident in their use of presentation packages and word processing, as seen in their approach to coursework tasks in English. They research topics in science for themselves, the task made easier by having their textbooks available online. However, opportunities for more advanced use of computing skills are not yet fully developed across the school.
- 3.11 Pupils' study skills from the youngest children are strong across the school throughout the curriculum. In the EYFS children explain the reasons for their actions in role play, for example when waiting patiently at the 'doctor's surgery'. In humanities junior pupils hypothesised and asked pertinent questions about the objects left by a 'mystery person'. Pupils consider information and ideas from a variety of sources during the design stage of design technology projects. They annotate handouts in English, and other subjects, to aid their understanding. The pupils show good ability at times to hypothesise and analyse situations, for example when considering how characters might act in a later part of the novel 'To Kill a Mockingbird' or when in physics they participated in an activity in which they successfully taught their peers, enhancing their own understanding of the topic at the same time. In art, pupils engage actively and sensitively in analysis of portraits and self-portraits of artists, looking at the feelings portrayed and analysing their own feelings, synthesising them into written notes and expressing them in colour.
- 3.12 Attitudes to their learning are very strong amongst the pupils across all year groups. They exhibit considerable concentration in class, demonstrate good behaviour almost always and eagerly participate in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic and purposeful, committed to making the most of the opportunities in and beyond the classroom. They feel that they can express themselves freely, and show support and respect to one another. They approach each task readily, settle quickly into their work and show considerable ability to persevere with their tasks and support each other in the pursuit of success. Older pupils are willing volunteers to help mentor younger pupils. Sportsmen in Year 10 help to coach the younger age groups. Similar arrangements were seen for production rehearsals and in the harp ensemble session. They enjoy learning and speak proudly about their own achievements as well as those of the school.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 From the earliest stages of their education at Ballard School, pupils are encouraged to be reflective, set high expectations of themselves and display confidence and resilience. Whatever their starting point, pupils develop confidence and become determined to give their best. They feel positive about themselves and their places within the school community. Pupils are reflective and have high levels of self-esteem and empathy. They are highly successful in displaying these characteristics through academic study as well as the wealth of sporting, performing arts and extra-curricular opportunities in which they participate. In a hockey match, pupils displayed high levels of resilience and positive teamwork when faced by superior opposition. In a debate, each pupil had their own target to improve their contribution to the team or delivery of their argument. Pupils express themselves and advance their ideas in confidence that their peers listen supportively. Pupils evaluate their own and each other's work in art and DT. The school honours achievement through credits, certificates, badges and display of good work, enhancing the pupils' sense of self-worth. Pupils are further developing their self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience very well in a manner appropriate for their age in a variety of ways such as by collaborating as mentors, by participating in choir, orchestra,

sports teams and coaching, through sporting and drama activities which engage those of all abilities and e-programmes which assist pupils in recognising their skills and abilities.

- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate a clear awareness that the decisions they make affect their success at the school and for their futures. Beyond the classroom pupils are presented with a variety of options aimed at helping them make decisions which will affect their future. There are examples of considerable success such as one group being Young Enterprise local winners in 2013. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is run at Bronze and Silver levels and Ballard runs a Challenge Week to help develop leadership skills.
- 3.16 Pupils have a strong appreciation of elements of the non-material aspects of life. They are aware that the arts, and the opportunities they give for personal reflection, are a natural part of their school lives. Pupils help others for little or no reward and, through mentoring programmes and form time, they engage actively in debates and discussion. Nurtured within the ethos of embedded Christian values, pupils are reflective and accept spiritual development as an intrinsic part of school life.
- 3.17 Behaviour is excellent throughout the school and pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They have a strong sense of justice and fairness. Pupils have a clear understanding of behavioural guidelines due to the consistent use of the Ballard Bees and system of rewards and certificates for good behaviour. The support system provided by the school, for example the use of peer mentors and Lunch Bunch Club, ensures that pupils instantly challenge unkind behaviours. The perception of those interviewed is that there are rare incidents of bullying and that, when they do occur, the school handles them well. The pupils are extremely polite, co-operative and well-behaved. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour and recognise the importance of being truthful. Cordial relationships throughout the community encourage consideration and respect for others. Pupils have learned to give others space to express their own ideas and opinions and then to respond positively and supportively with a deeply kind and caring spirit.
- 3.18 Pupils are very positive about their school. From the EYFS onwards they welcome visitors and newcomers warmly. A system of peer mentoring for new pupils, and the involvement of older pupils with those in the pre-prep, contribute to the relaxed working environment even for the youngest pupils and the positive, friendly atmosphere that characterises the school. The pupils are dedicated to their school and take great pride in the various roles and responsibilities on offer. From the youngest pupils in the school through to the Head Boy and Girl and a very active School Council, pupils of all ages seek out and thrive in contributing to the school community. Pupil representatives from Year 3 upwards participate in School Council, debating together, making common decisions and achieving common goals to make a difference to school life. For example, the dance studio floor now receives improved maintenance following an investigation instigated by School Council. Pupils enjoy working with others. High levels of co-operation are expected and pupils respond to this by contributing well in both group and individual situations. Pupils work together effectively and they are given many opportunities for collaborative work particularly in science or maths as in the 'Fruit Machine' game which pairs pupils randomly before a mathematical problem-solving task is given. Senior pupils set a positive example to the younger pupils. They are excellent at working with one another whether this be their peers in class activities, in being a buddy to new pupils to help them settle in, reading with the Early Years children, as subject mentors, as guides for new parents, or as prefects assisting with order at lunchtime.
- 3.19 Pupils readily give of their time and talents to help others. They are aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves and engage enthusiastically in charitable endeavours, both locally in donating provisions for a local food bank and internationally when filling shoeboxes for needy children abroad. Pupils enjoy being involved with fundraising and charitable giving is supported strongly. Within the House system, pupils discuss and vote for which local charities to support. Recently Home-Start, a charity for people with young children, has been such a focus. Cake sales, stalls set out at fireworks night and Christmas fair events, and sponsored cycle rides are examples of the ways in which pupils raise funds for charities. Pupils appreciate that the need is not always

financial. Recently a group of senior pupils offered their skills in support of a drama project at a local primary school. They helped the pupils there with writing the script and performing their final production of *Aladdin Junior* at the Performing Arts Centre at Ballard School. All involved benefited from the endeavour and found it very rewarding.

- 3.20 Pupils show tremendous respect for one another whatever their background. The relationships between pupils and staff are characterised by caring and kindness. Pupils see themselves as part of a cohesive school family and have enormous affection for this family of which they are part. Pupils participate enthusiastically in sport regardless of age, gender, skill or talent. They exhibit maturity in understanding that everyone has needs and worries and actively support those with special needs such as deafness, or dyslexia.
- 3.21 Pupils are secure in their knowledge of what they need to do to stay healthy. Pupils speak highly of the PSHE provision for the way it addresses so many issues such as body image, coping with stress, and relaxation techniques, enhancing their confidence and enabling them to understand how to be mentally healthy as well as physically healthy. Speakers assist in developing pupils' awareness of themselves and learning to become comfortable and accepting of their adolescent self. Pupils know about how to stay safe online and have an awareness of emotional health issues. Most pupils participate in sport or creative pursuits and yet they are aware of the need not to do too much, but rather to balance their activities with time for their studies.

## 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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended 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 and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Linda Smallwood	Reporting inspector
Mr Dougal Philps	Compliance team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Huw Daniel	Team inspector (Deputy headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Richard Dain	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Gillam	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Gillian Bilbo	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (former Head of GSA junior school)
Miss Jenifer Hillman	Team inspector for EYFS (Head of pre-prep, ISA school)