



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Chetham's School of Music

January 2020



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School's Details

School	Chetham's School of Music			
DfE number	352/6021			
Registered charity number	526702			
Address	Chetham's School of Music Long Millgate Manchester M3 1SB			
Telephone number	01618 349644			
Email address	hello@chethams.com			
Principal	Mr Alun Jones			
Chair of governors	Mr Malcolm Edge			
Age range	8 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	320			
	Day pupils	107	Boarders	213
	Juniors Years 4 to 6	35	Seniors Years 7 to 11	144
	Sixth Form Years 12 to 13	141		
Inspection dates	14 to 16 January 2020			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Chetham's School of Music is a specialist co-educational day and boarding school for musically gifted pupils aged between 8 and 18 years, situated in the centre of Manchester. It is part of the Foundation of Chetham's Hospital School and Library founded in 1653, which comprises three separate charities. Governance is provided by a governing body some of whose members are appointed by the Feoffees (trustees) of Chetham's Hospital, Manchester City Council and Manchester Cathedral. Boarders are accommodated in three houses: Victoria House for the younger pupils and a boys' house and girls' house for older pupils. Some younger day pupils are choristers at the adjacent Manchester Cathedral. The current principal has been in post since September 2016.
- 1.2 Shortly after the previous regulatory compliance inspection in March 2017, the school opened The Stoller Hall, a 482-seater concert hall which forms part of the new school building opened in 2012, which comprises performance venues, many music practice rooms and most of the school's teaching accommodation. A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2017. In September 2018, the school's management structure was reorganised, a new vice principal was appointed, a 'Fit to Perform' programme was initiated, and a major refurbishment of the boys' boarding accommodation commenced, the first stage of which was completed a year later.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to educate musically gifted children between the ages of 8 and 18, whatever their social, ethnic and cultural background and financial circumstances. The school seeks to: promote excellence in the study and performance of music; encourage pupils to acquire knowledge relating to music, arts and the sciences, and to develop aesthetic appreciation and discrimination, creativity and sensitivity; promote internationalism; develop social skills including co-operation, tolerance, perseverance, self-confidence, humility, self-awareness and awareness of the need of others; and foster a positive attitude towards health, sport and recreation.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from very varied backgrounds; most are drawn from across the United Kingdom and around 15 per cent come from overseas. Four out of five pupils are supported financially by the government's music and dance scheme (MDS) grants. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils varies widely but, overall, is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 49 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyscalculia, autistic spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, all of whom have a bespoke plan of support. One pupil in the school has an unfunded education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 68 pupils, of whom 22 receive additional support for their English. All pupils who attend Chetham's are gifted musicians.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 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 2015 to 2018, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 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. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes 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. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key findings

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

- Pupils' musical achievements are exceptional; pupils perform at the very highest level and are extremely well prepared to pursue musical studies at conservatoires or universities.
- Pupils achieve high standards and make above average progress in their academic work; results at GCSE and A level are consistently above the national average.
- Pupils have excellent communication skills; their speaking and listening skills are particularly strong.
- Pupils are highly successful at transferring the skills gained through their intensive music tuition to their academic work.
- Pupils show high levels of commitment to their musical studies and a fierce determination to succeed.

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

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of perseverance in practice, self-confidence in performance and self-understanding of how they might improve.
- Pupils make sensible decisions about managing their time and strike an appropriate balance between the demands of rehearsal and practice and those of their academic work.
- Pupils' social development, their ability to collaborate with others, and their cultural and spiritual understanding are all excellent.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to the local community through the school's community outreach programme and the many concerts offered to the public each week.

Recommendations

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

- broadening pupils' achievements and helping them to develop healthy and balanced lifestyles through extending their participation in a wider range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities.

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 is highly successful in fulfilling its aim to enable musically gifted children, whatever their background or financial circumstances, to achieve excellence in the study and performance of music. The standards of musicianship achieved by the pupils are truly exceptional and very wide ranging. Throughout the inspection, inspectors observed pupils from the very youngest to the oldest performing at levels way beyond those normally found for their age and in many different settings. At any time of the day, dozens of pupils can be observed engaging in instrumental lessons or purposeful individual practice, then later working together in ensembles or larger groups. In the five public concerts staged during the three days of the inspection, pupils demonstrated exceptional talent on the piano, violin, cello, trumpet, tuba, clarinet, saxophone and other instruments, playing, amongst other pieces, the solo parts of concertos from composers such as Britten, Beethoven, Weber and Saint-Saëns from memory. Their performances were of the very highest standard, achievable only through many hours of concentrated practice and strong commitment to achieving perfection. A measure of the school's success is that almost every pupil gains a place at a university or conservatoire of their choice, the very large majority choosing to pursue a career in music. Of the two-thirds entering conservatoires, a large majority have gained scholarships in the last three years, and of those entering university most gain places at universities with high standards of entry.
- 3.6 These exceptional standards are a result of the commitment of the school's leadership to promoting musical excellence and ensuring outstanding provision for all pupils from the moment they join the school. The instrumental tuition programme is vast and of extremely high quality, the school bringing tutors from different parts of the country and from abroad to foster each pupil's unique talents. All pupils receive an hour and a half of instrumental tuition in their first instrument and a further half hour in their second instrument. Pupils devote hours of individual practice each day to further their talent, and there are countless opportunities to perform in ensembles, larger orchestral and vocal groups and as soloists. Pupils' skills are continually extended through their individual lessons, then in carefully managed sessions where they perform to their peers who analyse and critique their performance, and then through performing in the many public concerts staged either in the school or in other venues. The school's excellent facilities also contribute in no small measure to pupils' musical success. The new school building, which was opened in 2012, provides many well-appointed individual practice rooms, larger rooms for group performance, and a smaller concert hall, whilst the Stoller Hall, which was added in 2017, provides a state-of-the-art performance venue with superb acoustics.
- 3.7 Not only do pupils achieve exceptionally well in music, but they achieve high standards in their academic work. At GCSE, well over half of the passes have been at grades A* or A or equivalent over the last three years, and overall results have been above average when compared to those of maintained schools. At A level for the same period, over three-quarters of passes have been at grades A*, A or B. Overall, results have been above the average for maintained schools, although in two of the last three years, they were well above average. Results in music at both GCSE and A level are exceptional, with the very large majority of pupils achieving the highest grades. Comparative data show that pupils make above average progress both during their GCSE and A-level years. This level of performance is all the more significant given the constraints imposed by the many hours devoted to music. Although pupils take slightly fewer and a narrower range of subjects than pupils in most other schools, they achieve well despite less time spent in lessons and the many interruptions to the normal routine because of instrumental lessons, concerts and performances. In addition, pupils join the school at different stages and from very different educational backgrounds, many in the later years coming from overseas and with varying levels of competence in English. The latter progress well because of additional support provided by the school's compensatory education department, as do pupils with SEND.

- 3.8 Pupils have excellent communication skills, develop an appropriate level of competence in mathematics and are skilled in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' speaking and listening skills are particularly strong. For example, pupils introducing their concert pieces did so with confidence and flair, whilst those who listened attentively to a fellow musician giving a solo performance provided carefully worded and insightful feedback after the performance. Younger pupils become highly competent readers developing skills of inference and deduction. In Years 7 and 8, a good number of pupils get their work published as a result of entering creative writing competitions. Older pupils demonstrate excellent use of subject-specific vocabulary, for example in science. Throughout the school, pupils are confident users of ICT, particularly in relation to music where they become skilled in digital composition and the use of musical notation software. Older pupils develop a sophisticated understanding of how digital hardware can create, shape and record music and become skilled in the use of state-of-the-art recording suites and digital editing booths and studios. A small number of pupils successfully take the European Computer Driving Certificate or Licence.
- 3.9 Pupils transfer the skills they gain through careful attention to detail and rigorous analysis of performance in music to other subjects. For example, senior school pupils demonstrated highly competent analytical skills as they interpreted a love scene from *Much Ado About Nothing*, whilst elsewhere a brass quartet showed excellent ability to analyse their own performance and bring about improvement through self-criticism and analysis. Pupils show strong self-motivation, dedication and self-discipline in their pursuit of musical excellence and transfer these skills well to their academic studies.
- 3.10 Many factors contribute to pupils' excellent achievements, but the extremely high quality of tuition in music forms the bedrock of pupils' musical and academic success. Pupils receive a constant flow of individual constructive verbal feedback on their performance, what was wrong, what needs improvement and what progress is made. Through the highly skilful questioning of their tutors, pupils become skilled in reflecting on their progress and how it could be improved. Teachers encourage pupils not to be scared of making mistakes but, through learning from them, to look for perfection. In turn, pupils have a positive and good-humoured approach to giving feedback to each other. Past pupils and famous musicians feature frequently in the school's calendar, giving master classes and imparting invaluable musical advice and guidance. The teaching in other subjects can be somewhat pedestrian at times, but pupils were full of praise for the out-of-lesson support provided by their teachers, their approachability, their adaptability and their willingness to help pupils catch up whenever they have had to miss lessons because of their musical commitments. Boarding also contributes strongly towards pupils' achievements, as the longer school day and the excellent facilities which are available in the evenings provide many more opportunities for pupils to rehearse and engage in individual practice than are available in a day school. Many boarders also appreciate the additional help and support provided by boarding staff.
- 3.11 Pupils' extra-curricular achievements are not as extensive as the very wide range of musical achievements, a fact reflected in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires in which a small minority of parents and pupils commented on the lack of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for physical activity, a view which is partially supported by the inspection findings. Over the last two years, however, the extra-curricular achievements of pupils in the junior school and the lower part of the senior school have grown markedly as a result of initiatives introduced by the school's leaders to provide non-pressurised outlets and activities to act as a counterbalance for the intense pressure experienced in their musical and academic activities. Over 40 younger pupils are learning new skills through their involvement in scouts and cubs, and almost 30 senior pupils are engaged in achieving their Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) at either bronze or silver level. Other pupils take part in cooking and craft activities or pursue first-aid qualifications. For the first time in many years, the school now boasts its own football team.

- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes are excellent. They demonstrate high levels of commitment to their musical studies, taking responsibility for their own music practice and their busy schedules and showing a fierce determination to succeed. This approach to music spills over into their academic studies where their resolve is equally strong. Pupils work well individually and as part of a greater team. They are happy to nominate themselves to lead groups or to take direction from others. They all show great respect for each other's individuality. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils and the pupils rise to the challenge. They enjoy being treated as responsible young adults and set high standards for each other.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils amply fulfil the school's aim to develop perseverance and self-confidence, developing these characteristics from a very early age. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-discipline as they take responsibility for organising their own practice time each day. Whilst practice areas are supervised by a team of administrators and supervisors, pupils practise independently with clear focus and determination; they show remarkable resilience as they persevere to master complex musical pieces, often going over a piece again and again until they perfect it. The result is seen in the extremely high standards of performance, such as those exhibited by pupils in the concerts which took place during the inspection and which would be impossible without such commitment. Pupils demonstrate supreme levels of self-confidence on such occasions, managing their nerves and emotions and dealing exceptionally well with the pressure of performance, yet demonstrating great modesty about their talents.
- 3.15 Pupils show a highly developed understanding of how to improve their performance as a result of the excellent guidance provided by their music tutors, and the many opportunities to analyse their own performance and that of others. Such sessions also help pupils to develop resilience, the ability to deal with criticism and to deal with disappointment when they are not chosen, for example, to be the soloist. These skills are not just evident in musical performance but also in their approach to other lessons. GCSE pupils, for example, were observed demonstrating discipline, confidence and resilience in a drama lesson as they worked together to produce drama improvisations and greeted the constructive criticism of their peers with genuine appreciation.
- 3.16 Pupils learn the importance of making their own decisions and realise from an early age that dedication and practice are required for excellence in performance. The unavoidable deadlines of performance, whether to a group of peers in a performance class, participation in an ensemble or the more public performance in concert, act as powerful motivators to make the right decisions as pupils know that success depends on practice and preparation. Pupils are realistic about the difficulties of maintaining the right balance between achieving musical excellence and performing well in their academic studies; they feel generally that they get the balance right, although say it is not always easy. Pupils are also highly responsible in the decisions they make about their own behaviour. The school's recently introduced system for managing behaviour, ERIC (exploration, restoration, improvement, consequences), encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour rather than imposing a rigid system of externally imposed discipline. It has helped pupils to make sensible choices and has led to a marked decrease in the need for punitive sanctions.
- 3.17 Pupils learn resilience on a variety of residential trips such as the annual year 9 trip to the Peak District and the 2020 Victoria House lower school trip to Snowdonia.

- 3.18 In addition to the excellence of the musical tuition, many other factors contribute to the development of these personal qualities. Boarding contributes strongly as pupils live and breathe an environment which is geared to fostering musical achievement throughout the extended day, enabling like-minded people to support and encourage each other. A gradual reduction of constraints as pupils progress through the school helps them to take increasing responsibility for their own achievement. The school's pastoral structure, teachers, practice supervisors and the support provided for those with SEND through the compensatory education department, all contribute strongly to pupils' personal development. Pupils learn new skills and develop resilience on a variety of residential trips, such as the annual trip for pupils in Year 9 to the Peak District, and through participation in the many community outreach programmes. The recent introduction of cubs, scouts and the DofE programme helps pupils to face different types of challenge and develop physical resilience and mental strength in different contexts. Pupils are, indeed, very well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- 3.19 Pupils' social development, their ability to collaborate with others, their contribution to others, their cultural understanding and their spiritual understanding are all excellent, thus amply fulfilling the school's aims to develop social skills, including co-operation, tolerance and awareness of the needs of others, to promote internationalism and to develop aesthetic appreciation, creativity and sensitivity. The act of creating music together encourages collaborative working, and this attitude spills over into other domains as well. For example, GCSE pupils worked together extremely well in small groups on an improvisation challenge. Each person was encouraged to have individual input into the group work, all were willing to try out each other's ideas, and they gave constructive feedback in a polite manner whilst considering each other's feelings. Many pupils come from backgrounds where their unique talents have been rejected or caused isolation, yet within the school community they are enabled to flourish socially. The diversity of the school's population helps pupils to develop respect for, and appreciation of, other cultures. Pupils are not only sensitive and tolerant to those from diverse backgrounds but actively enjoy exploring different cultures and learning from them. During the inspection, for example, a group of pupils discussed with interest the different approaches experienced by British and Chinese pupils to their musical education before joining the school, whilst at lunch, a group of junior pupils, all from different countries, enjoyed each other's company, showing genuine care and concern for each other. Pupils' cultural understanding is also fostered through a wide range of guest conductors, music tutors and master classes from around the world, and the musical repertoire is culturally diverse.
- 3.20 The richness of the school's musical offering also engenders a strong spiritual appreciation of the non-material. Through their concert performances during the inspection, performers showed extraordinary spiritual sensitivity and depths of insight in their interpretations, evoking a sense of awe and wonder in those who were privileged to witness their performances. This sensitivity is seen in other areas as well. For example, in an A-level lesson looking at dramatic mechanisms in the play *Metamorphosis*, pupils showed a sophisticated understanding of emotional responses and a well-developed awareness of sympathy and empathy. Younger pupils offered insight into the way such skills are developed, saying that they came into the school with little appreciation of the arts or music, but have been taught by inspiring teachers how to listen to music and appreciate its beauty.

- 3.21 Many pupils make significant progress in developing their social skills whilst at the same time making invaluable contributions to the local community through the community outreach programme. They develop the ability to work in different settings, with people with profound learning difficulties, with disabled people, or with pupils in other schools who have had little musical experience. Those who participate in scouts and the DofE scheme also contribute similarly through the service components of their programmes. Within the school, many pupils accept responsibilities as school and music prefects, house committee and student forum representatives and 'guardian angels', amongst others, which contribute to the smooth running of the school whilst at the same time developing their own leadership skills. Younger pupils particularly appreciate the support and friendship provided by their sixth-form 'guardian angels'. The whole school makes a major contribution to the local community through the many concerts which are offered free of charge to the public each week, whilst the juniors who are choristers play a major role in the services of the neighbouring cathedral. Pupils' involvement in charity work gives them a deeper view of what happens in the world, opening their minds to, and building a level of compassion for, those who are less fortunate than they.
- 3.22 Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They appreciate the importance of the constant safeguarding reminders delivered by staff, and all know what to do in an emergency situation both within school or if away from the school. They understand the importance of e-safety and the dangers of social media, and know to whom they can turn should they experience difficulties or have concerns. Most pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves physically and mentally healthy, particularly in terms of exercise and a balanced lifestyle and are fully aware of the dangers of living under the constant pressure to achieve musically as well as academically. In discussion with inspectors, various pupils gave lucid accounts of how important it was for them to achieve a balanced lifestyle by having compensatory activities which they could enjoy without the pressure of examination. They commented favourably on the initiatives of the school's leadership to introduce a greater variety of extra-curricular and physical activities, such as the school's 'Fit to Perform' programme, evening activities, scouts and the DofE programme, in accordance with the school's aim to foster a positive attitude towards health, sport and recreation. However, pupils offering these insights, the school's leaders themselves and the findings of the inspection conclude that the range of opportunities and the enthusiastic participation of younger pupils to them have yet to extend throughout the school and to the oldest pupils in particular, some of whom find the level of pressure and resultant anxiety hard to live with at times.
- 3.23 Despite this, there is absolutely no doubt that the school offers its pupils excellent opportunities to develop musically, academically and personally, producing musicians of the very highest calibre who are extremely well equipped for their future education and musical careers.

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 and observed a sample of the activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Graham Sims	Reporting inspector
Miss Sarah Hughes	Compliance team inspector (Head of senior school, GSA school)
Mrs Anne Camm	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathryn Crewe-Read	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Stuart Corrie	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head pastoral, HMC school)