

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

Concord College

February 2019



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School's Details

College	Concord Colleg	ge		
DfE number	893/6020			
Registered charity number	326279			
Address	Concord Colleg			
	Acton Burnell Hall			
	Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury		
	Shropshire			
	SY5 7PF			
Telephone number	01694 731631			
Email address	enquiries@cor	enquiries@concordcollege.org.uk		
Principal	Mr Neil Hawkii	Mr Neil Hawkins		
Chair of governors	Dr Iain Bride	Dr Iain Bride		
Age range	12 to 19	12 to 19		
Number of pupils on roll	597	597		
	Boys	289	Girls	308
	Day pupils	104	Boarders	493
	Seniors	203	Sixth Form	394
Inspection dates	26 to 28 Febru	26 to 28 February 2019		

Background Information 4

1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Concord College is an international co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 12 and 19 years situated near Shrewsbury. The school was founded in 1949 and became a charitable educational trust in 1983. The trustees of the charity form the board of governors. Since the previous inspection, the school has added to its grounds and extended its dining room and library. A new boarding house has been added and others have been refurbished; a new science block was opened in January 2018. The school has augmented its senior team and has reviewed many of its pastoral and academic structures.

1.2 The lower school is for Years 9 to 11 and the upper school for Years 12 and 13. Boarders are accommodated in 17 residences, most of which are on the campus and the rest are close by in Acton Burnell or Acton Pigot.

What the school seeks to do

1.3 The college is an international community committed to high academic standards, dedication and mutual respect. Pupils, supported by staff, are expected to behave with kindness in a way that promotes harmony, decency and trust.

About the pupils

1.4 Pupils come from business and professional families in the local area and from overseas, and most pupils board. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 46 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, 15 of whom receive additional help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 49 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers and by specialist support classes. The needs of pupils with special gifts and talents are addressed through the curriculum and enrichment activities.

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.

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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> Regulations 2014, <u>National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools</u>, <u>Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework</u>.

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 The lower school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE examinations have been higher than worldwide norms.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2017 have been well above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools, and well above the national average for maintained selective 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. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 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. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

School name	National Curriculum name	
Form 3	Year 9	
Form 4	Year 10	
Form 5	Year 11	
6.1	Year 12	
6.2	Year 13	

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils' academic achievements are outstanding as shown by their attainment in public examinations and in their high rates of progress in their lessons and independent studies.
 - Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent as they are highly motivated to succeed and are equally successful whether working independently or collaboratively.
 - Pupils develop outstanding study skills during their time at school.
 - Pupils' numeracy skills are outstanding.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils strongly respect and value the rich diversity within their school community and they enjoy the many opportunities to explore the cultures, backgrounds and beliefs of their fellow pupils.
 - Pupils understand themselves well and rapidly develop high levels of self-confidence and self-discipline which help them to improve their own learning as they prepare for the future.
 - Pupils are highly collaborative, and many develop excellent leadership skills during their time at school.
 - Pupils actively seek opportunities to contribute to their school and wider community.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of these excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following:
 - Ensure that, in all lessons, consideration has been given to the opportunities for all pupils to develop their speaking skills.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The pupils' high achievements fulfil the school's aim to provide an excellent academic education. Pupils consistently gain excellent grades in public examinations such as GCSE, IGCSE, BTEC and A level, and they achieve grades well above those predicted for them by nationally standardised tests. Increasing numbers of pupils opt to participate in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in the sixth form, supported by dedicated and knowledgeable teachers, and, in the previous two years, the majority have achieved either an A or an A* grade.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND and EAL make similarly rapid progress because their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive highly effective individual and classroom support from their teachers. Pupils with EAL achieve high standards of competency in English and have no difficulty in accessing their chosen higher education courses. The large majority of sixth form pupils gain their first choice of course at universities with highly competitive entry requirements; with around half choosing the natural sciences, engineering and medicine. The standard of art at A level is high and many pupils choose courses in architecture or history of art. Of those applying for fine art, some reach a sufficiently high standard to be offered a place without the requirement to complete a foundation year.

- 3.7 Pupils rapidly acquire new knowledge and understanding as they adapt to the school's expectations for hard work and high aspiration. Weekly tests help to consolidate pupils' knowledge and enable them to practise their subject skills. These show that pupils have high levels of understanding which was observed in many lessons such as in English when pupils accurately used highly technical language when discussing linguistic effects, and in A-level geography, pupils revealed the depth of their understanding when discussing the perfect atmospheric conditions for hurricane development. Pupils say they are constantly encouraged by their teachers to try new things and not just to learn the facts, but to understand things. This approach is supported strongly by skilled and knowledgeable teachers who offer their expertise freely in and out of the classroom.
- 3.8 Pupils develop outstanding study skills during their time at school as they respond to the challenging curriculum. They appreciate the help they receive from teachers, library staff and tutors who help them build their skills, whether it is helping older pupils research for their EPQs, or enabling lower school mathematicians to remember the shape of a quadratic graph with smiley or sad faces. Pupils say they learn to study from their peers, and boarders cite the discussions they have in the residences in the evening and the discipline of the evening prep sessions. Pupils' excellent study skills are seen most clearly in the sixth form where pupils are revising for their A-level examinations and preparing for testing university interviews. Many are completing their EPQs to a level well beyond the confines of an A-level specification. Pupils draw on a wide range of sources and techniques as they demonstrate their excellent abilities to pose and test hypotheses, synthesise results and analyse their findings while researching topics as diverse as the effects of music therapy on patients with Alzheimer's, and a nutritional comparison of apples stored in a fridge or wrapped in a box.
- 3.9 Many pupils are highly skilled in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). They use it confidently and some say they rely on it for note-taking, essays, assignments and presentations. Most pupils use ICT extensively in their studies, and sixth form research projects showed an excellent use of a range of ICT applications and some outstanding poster summaries. Pupils apply their skills naturally in lessons; lower school pupils used websites confidently in biology to extract information about superfoods, and A-level physicists used spreadsheets efficiently to generate a gradient to infer Planck's constant.
- 3.10 Pupils' numeracy skills are at an exceptionally high level; even those who consider themselves as less able in mathematics are targeting the top grades at GCSE, and the most able pupils take an accelerated course and achieve the highest grades. Almost all pupils take A-level mathematics and a significant number take further mathematics. These excellent skills are applied confidently in sciences and many other subjects. Sixth form biologists used their statistical skills efficiently as they applied t-tests to investigate the differences in the sizes of leaf populations from different sides of a building, and in physics, pupils applied their excellent mathematical understanding to trends in the efficiency of heat engines and were able to predict an exponential decline resulting from heat loss.
- 3.11 Pupils' communication skills are at a high level. Those with EAL acquire English language rapidly in interactions with their peers, teachers and specialist EAL staff. They are encouraged to use their developing skills by the school's emphasis on everyday courtesy and kindness. Pupils are expected to greet people as they move around the school, and the informal, warm atmosphere encourages all pupils to talk to those they meet. Most lessons encourage high levels of interaction between the pupils and between the teacher and the pupils, but in a small minority of lessons, there were few opportunities for pupils to contribute. Public speaking is a strength of the school and pupils readily take the many opportunities to speak before an audience whether in class, in house assemblies and debates, or in activities such as the Model United Nations and national speech and drama examinations.

- 3.12 Pupils achieve at a high level in many of the competitions and activities open to them outside the classroom. Large numbers of pupils take part in the annual mathematics, science, astronomy and astrophysics Olympiads and the UK Maths Challenges; their achievements are outstanding with some pupils gaining some of the best results at national level. Many pupils excel in national examinations for speech and drama, debating and essay writing and in a variety of regional competitions, and there are many individual successes in a wide range of subjects and sports. Most pupils benefit strongly from the school's outdoor curriculum; school sports teams compete successfully with other schools and a number of pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award Scheme each year, achieving bronze or silver medals.
- 3.13 Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning and are highly motivated to succeed. Pupils of all ages take full responsibility for their own progress and work with their teachers to achieve their goals. Pupils are keen to learn in lessons and frequently work independently in their own time, pursuing their academic interests, often to a very high level. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all pupils agreed that the school encourages them to think and learn for themselves. Pupils work equally productively together as was seen in A-level history where pupils were discussing the British 1974 general election and considering the voting habits of the electorate. They enjoy group activities in lessons and some initiate activities in their own time, such as pupil-led discussion or revision groups, which support or extend their academic studies.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 The pupils fully meet the school's expectation that they will behave with kindness in a way that promotes harmony, decency and trust. This expectation is at the heart of the school's ethos; it is promoted and modelled by the trustees and senior leaders and all who work at the school. The relationships between pupils and staff are exceptionally good. They are informal but founded on mutual respect and are frequently full of good humour. Pupils strongly respect each other and value the rich diversity within their international school community, enjoying the many opportunities to explore the cultures, backgrounds and beliefs of their fellow pupils. Many spoke enthusiastically about the Winter Concert where they present musical and dance traditions from their own countries. They say this gives them an excellent opportunity to learn about and appreciate other cultures. Boarders say that everyone is friendly, and that the induction programme helps to 'break down walls' when they first arrive. In the questionnaire, all pupils agreed that the school encourages them to respect and tolerate other people.
- 3.16 Pupils are mature and thoughtful, they understand themselves well. This helps them to manage their emotions under stress and to develop appropriate strategies to cope with their workload, making lifestyle adjustments where necessary. Pupils say they are well supported in this by the school's routines and by caring staff who know them personally such as their house tutors and the residential boarding parents. In the questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that the boarding experience has supported their child's personal development. Pupils say they have developed their self-confidence during their time at school; for many, the roles they were offered in school were a catalyst for building resilience. Pupils describe organising induction games for younger pupils, giving a talk at physics club or becoming part of a music ensemble or sports team as things that built their self-confidence and self-esteem. Those pupils with EAL say that the opportunities offered in the lower school to develop their English were important, and they feel they are now more confident and well prepared for the future.
- 3.17 Pupils are aware of the decisions they must make regarding their future careers. They appreciate the informed advice and the range of information available to them in school, and they research their options rigorously before choosing appropriately which subjects to study or selecting possible courses in higher education.

- 3.18 Pupils exhibit high standards of behaviour and develop strong moral values. They respect the school rules and sanctions and appreciate the need for them, for example the rules needed to keep everyone safe whilst on the high-ropes activity in the school grounds. In the questionnaire, all pupils agreed that the school expects them to behave well. Pupils understand the everyday rules and laws of the country in which they are studying, and are aware that some, for example the laws on wearing a seat belt, may be different from those in their home countries.
- 3.19 Pupils have a strong awareness of the non-material aspects of life that reveals itself in their respect for the beliefs and feelings of their fellow pupils and often in a strong personal religious faith. The school encourages their spiritual development. It ensures pupils of all faiths can practise their religion freely by providing transport to places of worship, supporting societies such as the Christian Union and by facilitating the religious observances of pupils of all faiths. Pupils say they take time to reflect in their art, astronomy, drama and music studies and many appreciate the school grounds and the quiet space in the library as places where they can stop and think.
- 3.20 Pupils appreciate the need to maintain a healthy mind and body. They understand the guidance that the school gives them through the personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme, and relevant school assemblies that help them to manage their workload and to understand the importance of a healthy, balanced lifestyle and plenty of sleep. Most try to put these into practice, and the trustees' investment in sports and gymnastic facilities, the school's healthy catering arrangements and outdoor activities programme support their efforts.
- 3.21 Pupils are aware of their responsibility to contribute positively to their school and many take the initiative in organising school events and running clubs, societies and interest groups. Older pupils seek opportunities to help younger ones by becoming subject mentors or training to become student listeners. Others serve as lifeguards and student librarians and those selected to be prefects are proud of their roles and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils put on events in the community. The largest, the Winter Concert, which involves over half the pupils, raises money for local charities. Pupils also volunteer in the local community, they visit primary schools to promote the children's understanding of other cultures, and aspiring medical students volunteer to help in a care home once a week. Pupils and staff are keen to support a wide range of charities and donate large sums each year by selling second-hand books, running half-marathons or organising special events. Members of the Eco Club have reduced the impact of producing paper cups by providing eco-mugs. During the school holidays, pupils demonstrate their commitment to those less fortunate as some join school trips abroad to help in community projects such as building a water tower in a village in Madagascar or constructing greenhouses to grow vegetables for an urban agriculture project in Bolivia.
- 3.22 Pupils are highly collaborative and work together formally and informally to improve their academic understanding and to organise social and fund-raising events. They are extremely supportive of each other in sporting and outdoor activities such as team games and DoE expeditions, and in musical events and concerts which require commitment and perseverance. Pupils collaborate naturally to deepen their understanding and enjoyment of their subjects. This was seen for example in mathematics where A-level pupils shared their ideas when solving complex problems, and in lower school German where pupils enthusiastically worked together to develop their language skills. In boarding, pupils whose families may be many miles away build strong, supportive relationships with fellow boarders that sustain them during their time at school. Many pupils develop excellent leadership skills as they take the numerous opportunities offered by the school to work together to achieve their goals and so they develop the strong social skills that they will need in the future.

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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 trustees and safeguarding trustee, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house and tutor group meetings and assemblies. 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

Mrs Catherine Williamson Reporting inspector

Mrs Sarah Dawson Compliance team inspector (Former deputy head academic, HMC

school)

Mr Adrian Hallworth Team inspector for boarding (Principal, HMC school)

Mr Timothy Halsall Team inspector for boarding (Senior deputy head, HMC school)

Mr Alun Jones Team inspector for boarding (Principal, HMC school)

Mr Christian Kendall-Daw Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)

Mrs Kathryn Benson-Dugdale Team inspector (Senior tutor and director of music, HMC school)

Mr Thomas Brooksby Team inspector (Headmaster, SofH school)

Dr Sara Harnett Team inspector (Deputy head academic, HMC school)