

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

Swanbourne House School

December 2018



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School	Swanbourne H	louse Schoo	ol	
DfE number	825/6022			
Registered charity number	310640			
Address	Swanbourne			
	Milton Keynes	;		
	Buckinghamsh	nire		
	MK17 0HZ			
Telephone number	01296 720264			
Email address	office@swanb	ourne.org		
Head	Mrs Jane Thor	ре		
Chairman of governors	Mr John Willm	nott		
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	323			
	Boys	184	Girls	139
	Day pupils	295	Boarders	28
	Pre-prep	102	Prep	221
Inspection dates	4 to 6 Decemb	er 2018		

School's Details

1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Swanbourne House is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between the ages of two and thirteen. The school was founded as a boys' boarding school at its current location in 1920. During the 1970s it became co-educational and day pupils were admitted. The pre-preparatory section was opened in 1983. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. The current head took up her appointment in September 2018.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to provide an education with breadth and strong academic foundations through which pupils with a wide range of abilities and interests flourish. It seeks to cater for pupils' social, emotional, moral and spiritual well-being in a stimulating and creative academic environment, and to prepare day pupils and boarders within the context of a Christian pastoral ethos for their next school and for their future lives. It also aims to ensure that the education provided is underpinned by strong relationships between teachers, pupils and parents.

About the pupils

Pupils come mainly from business and professional backgrounds and most are from British families, with a very small minority coming from about ten different countries. Most of the day pupils live in the neighbourhood of Milton Keynes, Aylesbury or Leighton Buzzard. Standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above the national average. The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 38 of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for eighteen pupils, eight of whose needs are supported by additional specialist help. Data used by the school have identified 57 pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 48 other pupils because of their special talents in art, drama, music and sport.

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') 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 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 REGULATORY 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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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.

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</u> <u>Standards) Regulations 2014</u>, <u>National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools</u>, <u>Early Years Foundation</u> <u>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 relevant 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 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

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

- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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

2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 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 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.
- 2.15 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

- 2.16 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.17 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

- 2.18 The governing body 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.
- 2.19 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
Nursery	Nursery
4s	Reception
5s	Year 1
6s	Year 2
7s	Year 3
8s	Year 4
9s	Year 5
10s	Year 6
11s	Year 7
Top Year	Year 8

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils' enthusiastic engagement enables productive work and strong academic progress and achievement.
 - Pupils are able to flourish academically, thanks to the excellent rapport which they have with their teachers, who pay close attention to individuals' needs.
 - Pupils enjoy success and fulfilment in a wide range of activities beyond the classroom.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils display respect towards one another with ease, in accordance with the tenets of the Swanbourne Way.
 - Pupils are socially mature, and confident in their dealings with one another and with members of staff.
 - Pupils thrive as members of an inclusive community which celebrates diversity.

Recommendations

- 3.3 In the context of excellent outcomes, the school might wish to:
 - Bring the standard of all marking up to that of the best, supporting pupil achievement.
 - In the prep school, reward and encourage pupils' achievement in all subjects by displaying more of their best work in public places.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils with a wide range of abilities flourish in this school which succeeds in its stated aim to provide an education with breadth and strong academic foundations. Pupils also thrive in its stimulating and creative academic environment.
- 3.6 The school does not enter pupils for National Curriculum tests. Consequently, the pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence from observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils confirms this judgement. Throughout the school, from the EYFS upwards, pupils attained levels of academic performance significantly ahead of those expected at their ages and stages of development. Most leavers win places at senior schools with exacting entrance requirements, with a significant number of scholarships being awarded year on year. Pupils with SEND or EAL make excellent progress: they receive much appreciated specialist support which enables them to achieve largely on a par with their peers. Pupils make rapid progress, overseen by the teaching staff's careful and detailed tracking, monitoring and target-setting, with remedial action being taken where needed. The ablest pupils are challenged with appropriately demanding assignments and extension work, meeting the recommendation of the previous report that the school use data and guidance systematically in order to stretch more able pupils and support further those with EAL. Some advanced Year 8 work was seen during the inspection, such as solving quadratics graphically and the deployment of a very wide vocabulary in French and Latin.

- 3.7 Pupils gain a wide range of skills and knowledge from a broad curriculum, which gives due weight to the creative and performing arts, includes Latin, and offers the opportunity to sample Spanish and Mandarin. Pupils' educational experience is further extended and deepened by a programme of Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) which is wide-ranging and imaginative at every level. Pupils display a secure mastery of the content of their syllabuses. They produce a high volume of work and the presentation of their exercise books and files reflects pride and care. Many examples of high-quality work were observed. Nursery children sing their phonics with confidence. Pupils throughout the school are very proficient in spoken French, not least because it is largely taught in the language itself. Year 4 pupils displayed a clear understanding of aspects of chromatography, while Year 5 pupils had a secure grasp of the required elements of English grammar. In many instances, academic pupils displayed higher order thinking as they tackled subject topics, such as Year 6 pupils' evaluation of data concerning the fashion industry. In Year 4, the pupils' exploration of Viking boatbuilding illustrated their preparedness to study a topic thoughtfully and in some depth. As they move up the school pupils increasingly take responsibility for their own learning, through self-assessment and by taking the initiative to seek out a teacher in order to ask for help. In a Year 8 design lesson, for instance, pupils continually checked their design plans to determine whether alterations or improvements were required. In their responses to the questionnaire, most pupils acknowledged that they were encouraged to learn and think for themselves, and the overwhelming majority of staff respondents agreed that pupils develop effective learning skills, including working independently and taking the initiative in their learning.
- 3.8 Articulate and confident, pupils at all levels are able to express themselves clearly and cogently. They develop these attributes from countless opportunities to speak in public, including assemblies, chapel services, debates, poetry recital competitions and the many drama productions. They understand the protocols of class discussion and are active, sympathetic listeners. Most are fluent readers for their age and proficient on paper. Pupils in Year 8 have developed mature writing skills as they prepare for their entrance examinations. The best of their writing is excellent, drawing on a wide vocabulary creatively and expressively. All classes observed handled numbers and mathematical concepts confidently, the pupils enhancing their understanding from practical applications, such as Year 2 pupils adeptly making calculations involving coins. Pupils also applied mathematics productively in other disciplines, for instance using percentages, graphs and scales in geography and science. Pupils' proficiency in information and communication technology is enhanced by the many opportunities which they have for its use in various applications, such as making presentations and undertaking individual homework assignments. The ablest pupils in this discipline can become 'digital leaders', helping others both in class and elsewhere.
- 3.9 Pupils make strong progress and gain confidence from the quality of their lessons, which are genuinely collaborative. The lively pace of lessons is sustained not only by the momentum generated by the teacher but also by the responsiveness of the pupils who share in this partnership of enquiry. The teachers know their pupils very well and use a variety of techniques and resources, so that all pupils tend to be productively engaged, whatever their preferred learning styles. Knowledge and understanding are consolidated by well-planned lessons which often balance early exposition, explanation and discussion with later written assignments. At interview, pupils acknowledged the helpfulness of their teachers and said how much they valued 'send-ups', whereby they were rewarded with a certificate for outstanding work. The best of the marking of pupils' work is regular, encouraging and part of a real conversation, while some is sketchy and of limited value as an aid to academic improvement.
- 3.10 Most pupils' classroom behaviour is exemplary and makes a positive contribution to productive learning; during the inspection a few pupils showed that they had not yet acquired reliable work habits. On the whole, pupils are very enthusiastic in lessons, eager to contribute and keen to ask and answer questions. They work collaboratively in pairs and groups, often keen to be the first to succeed in a set task. They are very competitive, in a good-natured way. They undertake their extra-curricular activities in a similarly spirited and committed manner.

- 3.11 Pupils' horizons are broadened by residential trips at home and abroad, as well as subject-based visits to other schools, for example a science day and an orchestral day, and journeys to places of educational interest such as a Jewish museum, a Hindu temple, a Roman fort and a natural history museum. As they prepare for life after Swanbourne, Year 8 pupils' educational experience is greatly enriched by their programme, which includes life skills, philosophy, cookery and putting on a play.
- 3.12 Pupils achieve a high level of success across a wide range of activities beyond the classroom. The performing arts are a particular strength of the school, with ambitious plays being performed at all levels, including the EYFS, and many instrumental and choral ensembles taking place throughout the week. Notable examination success has been achieved in music, speech and drama. Recently, over ninety pupils gave individual performances at a local music festival, a third of them winning medals. Through the extensive sports programme, pupils develop their physical and tactical skills, learn about teamwork and further a healthy lifestyle. While there have been significant individual and team sporting successes at local, regional and national levels, this has not been at the expense of sport for all: in many sports there are several teams in every age group, thus giving a large number of pupils the chance to be proud to represent their school. Displays of pupils' work reward their creators and inspire others: achievements in art, design and other subjects are not, however, widely displayed in public places.
- 3.13 Strong relationships exist between pupils, teachers, and parents, in line with the school's aims. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school provides a suitable range of subjects and extra-curricular activities, and most were pleased with their child's progress and the skills which were being developed for the future.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 The pupils develop strongly as individuals, supported, in accordance with the school's stated aim, by high-quality provision for their social, moral and spiritual well-being and by its excellent pastoral care, underpinned by Christian values.
- 3.16 Pupils' strongly developed confidence and sense of self-worth owe much to the excellent rapport which they enjoy with the staff, and the excellent quality of pastoral care and the personal tutor system. Relationships are built on trust. Pupils speak affectionately of the warmth of the school community, its inclusivity and the opportunities which it provides for all pupils to achieve personal fulfilment. They say that they are very proud of their school.
- 3.17 Pupils' spiritual enrichment is enhanced by many experiences which they find inspiring and memorable. Uplifting musical performances and ambitious plays enrich the experience of participants and audiences alike. Recent visiting speakers, such as a tri-athlete and adventurer, open pupils' eyes to what is humanly possible. Pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding and acquire inspiring memories from visits to places of educational, cultural and general interest, in this country and abroad. Pupils who were interviewed recalled canoeing down the River Wye as being a very special experience. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities in chapel services, assemblies, PSHEE lessons, and important occasions such as Remembrance Sunday and religious festivals, to be quiet and reflect on the more profound aspects of life.
- 3.18 Pupils develop a strong moral understanding, a clear sense of right and wrong, and a respect for rules and laws. They greatly enjoy playing and running around in the spacious, attractive grounds, where pupils will readily recite two key rules: "Don't eat the berries off the trees" and "Don't walk near the ha-ha". Pupils who were interviewed said that they were treated fairly and that they saw the system of rewards and sanctions as fair, in contrast to the views of a very small minority of pupil respondents to the questionnaire, who felt the school does show some favouritism or treats them unfairly. When asked, younger pupils said that the older ones were kind and helpful and that they set a good example. Almost all of the parent and pupil respondents to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that the school encourages them to respect one another, and this was fully borne out during the inspection. Nearly all of the staff who responded to the questionnaire affirmed that pupils readily help and support others. Pupils generally display kindness and respect, living out two central tenets of the Swanbourne Way, a code of conduct devised by staff and pupils together and wholly endorsed by the board of governors.
- 3.19 The pupils are socially mature for their age. They engage articulately and personably with their teachers and tutors and with visiting adults. They know how to conduct themselves in a courteous and civilised manner and the general traffic of the school is cheerful and considerate. Co-operation and collaboration are of a high order. Nearly all of the pupil respondents felt that the school helps them to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Those interviewed said that they appreciate the opportunity to play in teams at many levels and that they are member of one of the four houses, to which they are very loyal. The pupils benefit from a large number of opportunities for leadership and service and they take their responsibilities seriously. They also appreciate the many chances for decision making. They choose who should be the recipients of their charitable giving and pupils themselves run the Eco Club. The music mentoring system enables pupils to discuss one another's performances. The leadership day on the first Saturday of every term, with its team-building exercises, is greatly valued by staff and pupils as developing important personal qualities. Heads of house have to take responsibility for a number of activities, such as choreographing dancing and helping to organise competitions which range from chess to croquet. Pupils have formal opportunities to propose improvements through the school council or at the senior prefects' weekly meeting with the

head. Pupils develop an awareness of the wider world and the importance of values through the PSHEE programme, in accordance with the school's aim to prepare pupils for their future lives.

- 3.20 Flexi-boarders find their Friday boarding experience highly enjoyable, with clear social benefits in terms of enhancing the sense of community, and it gives the older pupils who are bound for boarding schools an experience of sleeping away from home. The full boarders report that they get on very well with one another and that boarding benefits them in a number of ways: improving their resilience, independence and organisational and social skills. The benefits of boarding are further developed by a programme of annual residential adventure camps for pupils from Year 3 upwards.
- 3.21 Pupils understand the values of democracy and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs. At any one time there may be about a dozen nationalities represented in the school and pupils report that they all live together entirely harmoniously. Pupils celebrate diversity and learn about other cultures and beliefs not only in their lessons but from other sources. Not only is the French language consolidated in the annual residential trip to France, but pupils experience the local way of life and they visit places of interest. The pre-prep pupils were intrigued to hear about Diwali from a parent visitor. Themed days and meals celebrate other countries' festivals, and pupils talk at assemblies about their country and customs.
- 3.22 Pupils' well-being is promoted by the strong emphasis placed on safety and safeguarding. Staff were keen to underline this in their responses to the questionnaire. Systematic monitoring by leadership and governance of the safeguarding and other policies meets the recommendation of the previous inspection report that the school should achieve consistency over policies and procedures. Almost all of the pupils who responded to the questionnaires said that they felt safe at school and that they knew how to stay safe online. Throughout the school they are taught about online safety to an extent and in a manner appropriate to their age. Pupils learn how to keep safe in many contexts from a well-devised PSHEE programme, which has mental health as one of its key themes and focuses too on the understanding of emotions; it also contains pertinent information and guidance on sex and relationships. Pupils know the benefits of healthy eating and a balanced diet. Lunch menus offer choice, and always include salads and fresh fruit. Pupils take a great deal of exercise, in physical education lessons, games and sports, and recreationally.
- 3.23 When they leave, the pupils are extremely well prepared for the responsibilities, experiences and opportunities for the next chapter in their lives.

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, the vice-chairman of governors and the safeguarding governor, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and chapel. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Paul Spillane	Reporting inspector
Mrs Linda Smallwood	Accompanying inspector
Mr Jonathan Webster	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mrs Deborah Shephard	Team inspector for boarding (Head of seniors, IAPS school)
Mrs Gillian Smith	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Howard Tuckett	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)