

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report Quinton House School

February 2023

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DfE number	941/6043	941/6043			
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Headteacher	Mr Thomas I	Muskin			
General Manager	Mr Simon Ru	ıdland			
Proprietor	Cognita Scho	Cognita Schools Group			
Age range	2 to 19 years	5			
Number of pupils on roll	411				
	EYFS	27	Prep School	10	
	Seniors	248	Sixth Form	32	
Inspection dates	7 to 9 Februa	7 to 9 February 2023			

School's Details

1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Quinton House School is an independent, co-educational day school located in Northampton. The school was founded in 1946, and it was the first school in the UK acquired by the Cognita group of schools in 2004. The headmaster has executive responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school under the governance of a representative of the proprietor. Since the previous inspection, the school has re-opened the sixth form in new accommodation on the site in 2020, and the nursery started to take children one term before their third birthday.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school seeks to support the individual in making use of every opportunity to promote their academic and character development, to inspire a curiosity and wider cultural understanding which underpins a lifelong love of learning and to encourage its pupils to recognise their roles on a local and global scale to ensure that they are prepared for the test of life.

About the pupils

1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional and business family backgrounds, within a 20-mile radius of the school. School data indicate that the ability profile of the pupils covers a broad range. The school has identified 87 pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 76 receive additional specialist help. There is one pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 57 pupils of whom 8 receive additional support for their English. Pupils identified as the most able and those with particular talents have their curriculum modified or enhanced.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. Additionally, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are 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 FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. 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. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> <u>Regulations 2014, 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, 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 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2022, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the year 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 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 Pupils receive relationships education in the prep school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

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

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.14 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is 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.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is 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.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is 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 wellbeing of the pupils.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is 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.

The headline judgements apply 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 are highly articulate and effective communicators throughout the school which they apply confidently to their learning.
- Pupil attitudes to learning are exemplary; they demonstrate excellent initiative both individually and collaboratively.
- Pupils demonstrate and apply advanced information and communications technology (ICT) skills which they use effectively to support their learning.
- Throughout the school, pupils' development of skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum is excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent study skills where lessons challenge pupils to think about and use higher-order skills of analysis and hypothesis.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils are mature, insightful and perceptive for their age.
 - Pupils deeply respect and value diversity within their school and show a keen appreciation of their own and other cultures.
 - Pupils show high levels of social awareness and work effectively with others, which underpins the way they behave in school.
 - Pupils are confident and resilient with excellent decision-making skills.
 - Pupils contribute extremely positively and willingly to the school community and society more broadly and see this as a natural responsibility.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
 - Increase opportunities for pupils to improve their abilities to hypothesise, analyse and synthesise in order that there is a consistency of challenge for all pupils.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Most pupils make good progress, and some make rapid progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. School data indicate that the ability profile of the pupils covers a broad range. Analysis of school data, lesson observations and work scrutiny show that at GCSE most pupils attain grades higher, with some significantly higher, than expected for those of their ability. In 2022, over one-third of results were at the top grades, in line with the centre- and teacher-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021. Results in GCSE are indicative of the high quality of teaching and learning. Results show improvement beyond predictions for pupils in most subjects, and substantial improvement in some. Results at A level are equally indicative of the high quality of teaching and learning with attainment in 2022 being good, with one-quarter of results at the top two grades. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also make good progress, in line with their peers. Most leavers in 2022 gained a place at their first-choice university, some of which are universities with high entry requirements or equivalent institutions in specific fields. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that teaching enables their children to make progress. This is enabled by excellent leadership of academic provision and teaching which demonstrates detailed knowledge of individual pupils and strong mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils.
- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils develop and display an excellent range of knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subject areas. During a visit to the prep school by a paramedic team, the youngest pupils demonstrated excellent understanding of the different parts of the body. Reception children described knowledgably the use of bones, and Year 2 pupils explained articulately what happens to the heart when we exercise. Older pupils in a psychology lesson demonstrated excellent prior knowledge and understanding of Prochaska's model of behaviour and the ability to apply it to the new tasks being discussed. Year 9 pupils in art displayed extensive creative skills and aesthetic awareness to create and appreciate acrylic paintings of birch tree scenery. Strong linguistic competence was demonstrated by younger pupils in the senior school in a Spanish lesson when exploring and transcribing a listening task in the target language. In response to their prequestionnaire, a very large majority of pupils agreed that their teachers are supportive, know their subjects well and that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons. This view is supported by inspection evidence.
- 3.7 Attitudes to learning amongst all pupils in the school are excellent. They are deeply engaged in the learning process and demonstrate a passion for the various subjects they study. Pupils are very focused and productive in lessons, and the frequent opportunities for collaboration in both lessons and outside of the classroom confirm the excellent attitudes towards each other and to staff. Very co-operative and collaborative pair work was displayed by pupils in a Year 8 science lesson, confidently establishing definitions to scientific terms and then applying them successfully in a mini-practical investigation on elements and mixtures. Year 10 pupils in mathematics displayed strong commitment and active engagement when tackling challenging problem-solving questions on areas of sectors. Pupils frequently take ownership of their learning. Excellent independent learning was observed in a Year 6 English lesson when pupils, editing their own poetry, worked with purpose and perseverance, taking immense pride in their outcomes. The system of ambassadors who lead assemblies and many other activities demonstrates the strong and notable link between pupils' attitude to learning and their pastoral awareness.
- 3.8 All pupils, including those with SEND, speak with confidence, fluidity and clarity, expressing themselves articulately. This is a feature of some of the most effective learning in lessons. Pupils listen well and always respond to other pupils and staff with engagement, empathy and understanding. The development of prep school pupils' competence in all four areas of communication is excellent. Year 4 pupils wrote effective and very descriptive stories inspired by the stone age, and Year 6 pupils wrote fairy tales using appropriate, creative and well-developed language. In a Year 10 physics lesson, pupils

3.9 Pupils across the school are highly proficient and confident users of ICT and consider its use as a natural part of their learning. They are extremely adept at using different platforms and a wide range of software for research work, daily organisational tasks and to support and further their learning both at school and at home. In a music lesson, Year 9 pupils made excellent use of computer and music software in the development of their individual musical compositions displaying high-quality musical skills. Younger pupils in the senior school, confidently used their devices to successfully research the parts of the skeleton and the properties of our bone structure in a science lesson. All pupils studying drama in Year 13 systematically store and access their material using their personal devices. Prep school pupils in a Year 6 English lesson demonstrated very confident use of their word-processing skills when writing out their chosen poems on a leaf template electronically manipulating the text for their presentations.

example of this. Evidence from work scrutiny saw some very strong pieces of written English with

thoughtful exploration of the role of language, mode of expression, vocabulary and register.

- 3.10 Pupils are highly successful in their use of study skills. Throughout the school, in line with the school's aims, pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, display a wide range of sophisticated study habits and organisational and thinking skills. Across most subjects, pupils undertake detailed age-appropriate research and make insightful evaluations. For example, in a Year 12 politics lesson on our system of democracy, pupils displayed excellent critical analysis and evaluation of the pros and cons of change and the difference between other political systems. Year 10 pupils in their English lessons demonstrated a strong ability to synthesise previously covered ideas, concepts and contextual information and applied these together to new contexts. In a science lesson, senior school pupils successfully used prior knowledge and source information to draw complex conclusions on the order of reactivity of metals. Year 6 pupils in a critical thinking lesson demonstrated well-developed thinking skills when discussing a film they had viewed and shared inciteful ideas about the themes of teamwork, communication and negotiation. Opportunities for pupils to enhance their skills of hypothesis, analysis and synthesis were seen less in some subjects.
- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate an excellent level of numeracy both within their mathematics lessons and when applying their knowledge in other subjects such as the sciences, geography, business studies and critical thinking lessons in the prep school. In mathematics lessons, Year 7 pupils were challenged to evaluate why the solution to a numerical puzzle problem worked, actively exploring this independently to great effect, and Year 8 pupils demonstrated excellent numeracy skills in solving inequality problems. The younger pupils in the prep school made effective progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of number bonds to 20 with the most able working independently on number bonds to 100. In a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils' excellent use of statistical data enabled successful analysis of population growth across the world and representation of this data graphically. In a business studies lesson, Year 10 pupils applied their numeracy skills to great effect in a cost-and-profit analysis. The development of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) project across the senior school has enabled pupils to gain hands on experience of the application of mathematics to engineering.
- 3.12 Many pupils throughout the school achieve excellent and notable success individually and in teams in sporting, musical, artistic and cultural arenas. These achievements are facilitated by an extensive range of co-curricular and enrichment activities. Achievements outside of the curriculum include exceptional success in competitions at regional and national level in music and drama (LAMDA) examinations, instrumental and singing examinations, Royal Society of Chemistry top of the bench competition and in art, creative writing and poetry competitions. Pupils are highly successful

regionally in many sports, such as athletics, cricket, cross-country, golf, football and rugby. Success nationally has been achieved in dance, equestrian sports, hockey, karting, netball and swimming and internationally in volleyball. In discussions, pupils commented on the involvement of many pupils in the hugely popular and successful school's musical and drama productions and the performing arts Quintonbury festival. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (DofE) is viewed by the pupils as a particular strength of the school, and records of pupils' achievement in this area supports this view.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils are mature, insightful and perceptive for their age. Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent selfconfidence and a strong awareness of their personal development over time. The strong pastoral system and the school's ethos based on virtues of reflection, resilience, respect and determination prepares them comprehensively for the next stages of their life. In lessons and registration time, pupils embraced the opportunities to self-reflect and peer assess, allowing them to become more resilient to difficulty and challenge. For example, in art, Year 9 pupils' thoughtful, positive and constructive discussions with their peers increased their self-confidence and awareness of how to improve their individual pieces of artwork. In a Year 5 forest school lesson, pupils displayed excellent perseverance and resilience when creating a knot, called a devil's eye. Work experience, career and university mentoring all contribute to pupils' clear understanding about their future opportunities. Year 6 pupils commented on how much they appreciate the taster days in the senior school as preparation for their transition to it. A very large majority of parents in response to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children be confident and independent. Inspection evidence confirms that the school's aims are successfully realised in these respects. These excellent outcomes in pupils' personal development are due to the strong commitment of senior leaders, school governors and staff to providing high levels of caring and nurturing pastoral support.
- 3.15 Pupils' respect for diversity within society is excellent. They are extremely tolerant, caring and show sense and sensitivity to all those within their community and to those from different backgrounds and traditions. This was seen in lessons and evident in the varied friendship groups within the school where the atmosphere is one of mutual support. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of decency, respect and tolerance. Clear evidence to support this view exists through the excellent pupil-led work of the cultural ambassadors who successfully raise pupils' awareness of all aspects of diversity. Pupils of all faiths often take the initiative in delivering presentations of their faith or culture in school assemblies. Year 6 pupils in their critical thinking lesson reflected thoughtfully and compassionately on the experiences of people living entirely different lives to their own and what it must be like to be a refugee. In lessons, pupils listen to each other, including those with SEND and neurodiversity, with thoughtfulness, rooted in an acceptance of each person as an individual.
- 3.16 Pupils' social skills are highly developed. Social development and collaboration within the community are key features of what makes the school successful. Pupil interactions with each other and with staff are of high quality, being positive, honest, considerate and open. Pupils value the opportunities to work collaboratively, and there is clear understanding of how this benefits their learning as well as that of their peers. In discussion with the inspectors, senior school pupils commented on the collaborative and co-operative learning in physical education (PE) lessons with every pupil leading differing aspects of the course. In mathematics, they solve problems in a collegiate style with everybody contributing and discussing the tasks set. In a drama lesson, Year 10 pupils worked cohesively to co-create mini-drama pieces that relied on contributions from all involved. Year 3 pupils in a music lesson worked in groups to compose and perform excellent percussion pieces using boomwhackers. In response to the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that the school helps pupils develop teamwork and social skills. Inspection evidence supports this view.

- 3.17 Pupils have a strong social conscience and an excellent awareness of their social responsibilities to others and the wider world. They contribute extremely positively and willingly to the school and local communities, and to society more broadly. The school fully meets its aim to create a sense of community where pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils of all ages talk positively about the various roles within the school that enable them to support their peers. These include school prefects, house captains, school and eco council members, peer buddies for the younger pupils and school newspaper editors. The pupil-led system of ambassadors within the school, which include antibullying, wellbeing, cultural, global outlook, digital and sporting ambassadors, are valued very highly by both pupils and staff, as is their training. Pupils are highly aware of issues relating to inequality and express this most effectively through pupil-led whole-school and house-based charity work. They raise funds for local charities such as foodbanks, care homes, hospices and a Ukraine charity project as well as national and international charities. Older pupils are also involved in the volunteering programme of the DofE scheme.
- 3.18 Pupils' moral understanding and awareness are excellent and deeply embedded into the school ethos based on the values of courage, honesty, global outlook and integrity. They take full responsibility for their own behaviour. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and a strong awareness of the need to respect one another, the school's behavioural code and societal rules in general. Pupil leaders take their responsibilities seriously and model responsible behaviour in the school. Pupils are leading initiatives that challenge anti-community behaviour. For example, the excellent anti-bullying video presentation by one of the pupil cultural ambassadors was confidently delivered, being well-informed, powerful and meaningful. Pupils commented that, as it was delivered from a pupils' point of view, it was more impactful as a consequence. Year 10 pupils in an English lesson looking at the themes of violence and conflict in poetry excellently contextualised this into today's world of global tensions. In a Year 1 religious education (RE) lesson, pupils responded thoughtfully and clearly to questions asked regarding the moral of a Buddhist story, the milk and the jasmine flower, showing well-developed understanding.
- 3.19 Pupils of all ages display a strong level of spiritual understanding and sense of belonging. Discussions with pupils demonstrated that they are able to reflect deeply and thoughtfully on non-material aspects of life. In the prep school, Year 6 pupils display obvious enjoyment and engagement in making music together and, likewise, Year 3 pupils performing and watching each other's drama performances. Pupils of all ages in the prep school were able to articulate thoughtfully on how forest school activities developed their love of nature. In a Year 9 art lesson, pupils' appreciation of nature was evident both in the strong detail of their work, and their excellent explanation to the inspector of the subject material, trees in real life. This work had strong connections with the work of the eco-club who have planted trees around the school grounds to promote eco-awareness. In a RE lesson on different faiths, Year 9 pupils actively engaged in conversation with a Jehovah's Witness and discussed thoughtfully the differences between this faith and their own.
- 3.20 Pupils throughout the school are fully aware of the need to make careful, thoughtful and informed choices. In discussions with the inspectors, pupils commented upon and appreciated that decisions they make about academic work, relationships and their own feelings will have an impact upon their success, development and wellbeing. The school councils make meaningful decisions about different aspects of school life, which are readily implemented by the school. These have included changes to the school uniform, food provision in the dining hall, more school benches around the site and to the school's plastic cup provision. In lessons, decision-making is frequent. For example, in a Year 12 economics lesson, pupils made difficult but competent decisions about complex economic problems regarding the content and structure of their written answers. In a Year 5 science lesson, pupils successfully decided which equipment to use to test how long it took different substances to dissolve. In both schools, pupils are given the opportunities to decide on activities and clubs they wish to lead and appreciate the leadership development this provides.

3.21 Pupils are particularly mindful of looking after themselves both physically and mentally. They are aware of the need for a healthy diet and exercise and make choices that will actively support them to achieve this. All pupils throughout the school take part in regular physical exercise in the school setting. Pupils value the opportunities in the wellbeing curriculum to reflect on and demonstrate their awareness of mental health issues. They feel positive that they know how to access support for themselves, their peers and all people in their school community. Wellbeing Wednesday in the prep school and the pupil wellbeing ambassadors in the senior school play a key part in this. Almost all pupils agreed that they know how to stay safe online, and that they feel safe and secure in school, a consideration supported by all parents who responded to the questionnaire. The activity club run by the pupil digital ambassadors helps promote positive e-safety in the school. Inspection evidence confirms these views.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Mike Evans	Reporting inspector
Mrs Astrid McAuliffe	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Miss Joanna Gay	Team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Tom Keenan	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)