



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

The Mount, Mill Hill International School

January 2020



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School's Details

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|----------------------------------|--|----|--------------------|
| School | The Mount, Mill Hill International | | |
| DfE number | 302/6000 | | |
| Registered charity number | 1064758 | | |
| Address | The Mount, Mill Hill International Milespit Hill London NW7 2RX | | |
| Telephone number | 020 38263333 | | |
| Email address | office@millhimminternational.org.uk | | |
| Headmistress | Ms Sarah Bellotti | | |
| Chair of governors | Mr Elliot Lipton | | |
| Age range | 13 to 17 | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | Day pupils | 11 | Boarders 82 |
| Inspection dates | 21 to 23 January 2020 | | |

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Mount, Mill Hill International is a co-educational independent day and boarding school for pupils aged 13 to 17 years. It is one of four schools of the Mill Hill School Foundation which, between them, educate pupils aged 3 to 18 years on four separate sites within close proximity of each other. A court of governors oversees all four schools.
- 1.2 Boarders are integrated into five Mill Hill School boarding houses, one of which is for male pupils, one of which is for female pupils, with the other houses accommodating both male and female pupils. The site of The Mount is self-contained and is a five minutes' walk from Mill Hill School.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors and chief executive officer have been appointed.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school seeks to provide an optimum environment for excellent learning and a forward-looking curriculum. The intention is that pupils have an enriching experience and are equipped for a global world with a sense of confidence, well-being and purpose.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a wide range of international backgrounds, with a small number from the London area. Data provided by the school indicates that the ability of pupils is broadly average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified three pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 90 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2016 to 2018, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 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 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.

2.13 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. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and 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 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.

2.19 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:

| <i>School name</i> | <i>National Curriculum name</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Year 9 | Year 9 |
| Year 10 | Year 10 |
| Year 11 | Year 11 |
| Year 11O | Year 11 one-year GCSE course |
| Fast Track | One year intensive English course |

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes and engage extremely well in their learning.
 - Those pupils with EAL make rapid progress in their speaking, reading, writing and listening skills.
 - Pupils demonstrate excellent independent skills for learning.
 - Pupils collaborate and cooperate extremely well with one another.
 - Pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to progress as rapidly as they typically do.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils develop high levels of self-confidence from their school and boarding experience.
 - Pupils respect the school rules and take responsibility for their behaviour.
 - Pupils understand fully the importance of decision making for their future plans.
 - Pupils' social development and contributions to others is excellent.
 - Pupils embrace their international school experience with enthusiasm in school and in boarding.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
- Ensure sufficient challenge in all lessons to enable pupils to make rapid progress consistently.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils' achievement in public examinations is excellent. At GCSE in the years 2016 to 2018, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools. Over 46% of pupils gained grades A* to A, (9 to 7) in the years 2016-2018 and over 90% gained A* to C (9 to 4). In 2019, 43% gained grades 9-7 and 91% gained 9-7. Pupils achieved strong success in music, art, physics and in additional mathematics.
- 3.6 Pupils including those with EAL make excellent progress from their starting points in their learning. This is because leaders ensure thorough testing of pupils' language levels takes place on their arrival in the school. This assessment data is shared with teachers, almost all of whom plan skilfully so that pupils are enabled to make rapid progress in their learning. Pupils' progress is tracked by teachers and leaders with regular tutorial sessions to provide individual support, including to pupils with SEND so that they know how to improve in their work. However, in a small minority of lessons, pupils do not receive sufficient challenge to enable them to make the swift progress typically displayed. The overwhelming majority of parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teachers help pupils to learn and make progress and to develop skills for the future.
- 3.7 Pupils are eager to learn. They increasingly deepen their knowledge and understanding and apply their skills effectively across all areas of the curriculum. They listen attentively and anticipate that they will be involved in their learning. For example, in a GCSE geography lesson, pupils enthusiastically discussed the terms 'geologic' and 'atmospheric' in relation to categorising natural hazards and issues of global warming. In English, younger pupils explored key themes of ambition, loyalty and guilt in Macbeth. In a design and technology (DT) lesson, younger pupils demonstrated clear understanding of the Bauhaus movement using various saws to cut straight and wavy lines. GCSE physicists demonstrated strong use of key technical vocabulary and understanding of laws such as Hook's law

and in psychology, pupils discussed their ideas and wrote extended evaluations of the theory of reconstructive memory. Pupils' progress is excellent because teachers elicit knowledge through skilful questioning, constant reinforcing of language and teasing out key points.

- 3.8 Pupils rapidly develop excellent speaking, reading, writing and listening abilities, as their communication skills are practised throughout the day. Morning tutorial time begins with reading time which enables pupils to develop their comprehension skills. In an English language lesson, pupils developed their understanding and use of idioms such as 'turning a blind eye', and 'as a rule of thumb'. In an enrichment session, a group of artists discussed their individual projects at a high level. In a physical education (PE) lesson, pupils communicated extremely well in English with each other in order for one team to win the game. In discussions, boarders confirmed that they thoroughly enjoy practising their speaking and listening skills during the evenings with friends in their boarding houses. Pupils develop excellent communication skills because governors and leaders ensure that they are provided with plentiful opportunities and are well supported in their language use by supportive academic and boarding staff.
- 3.9 Pupils have excellent mathematical knowledge and apply their numeracy skills with competence and confidence across all areas of learning. For example, in a business studies lesson, pupils demonstrated their statistical ability in identifying taxation graphs and calculated the proportion of taxes paid under three tax systems for three income levels. In an English literature lesson, IGCSE pupils successfully calculated a week's wage in pre-decimal English money. In a mathematics lesson, GCSE pupils demonstrated increasing understanding of calculus differentiation and stationary values. In a business studies lesson, pupils explained cash flow forecasts and profit and loss spreadsheets very clearly and with understanding. Younger pupils employed trial and error methods systematically when determining where a shape would end up once rotated, hypothesizing where the centre of rotation might be.
- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate high levels of competence in information and communication technology (ICT) and apply their skills effectively to support their learning. They confidently use a particular application as a tool for personal organisation and effectively research and access on-line resources to prepare presentations and to discuss topics such as ethical fashion, or geographical hazards. All pupils are able to prepare a personal profile to share in tutorial time and in physics pupils use ICT well to present a topic on forms of energy to the class. In computer science IGCSE pupils demonstrated excellent skill at designing algorithms using both pseudocode and flowcharts. During a lunchtime activity, pupils were entirely focused when observed enthusiastically steering a drone around the building, practising the use of particular software.
- 3.11 Pupils develop strong study skills because they are encouraged by teachers to work independently. Their ability in independent study improves rapidly as their fluency and comprehension in English improves. This is extremely well supported by leaders and teachers, almost all of whom set appropriate levels of challenge in intended work. In IGCSE English work, pupils' study skills were clearly evident in their analysis and extended writing on Steinbeck's ability to create mood and atmosphere in *Of Mice and Men*. In a GCSE psychology lesson, pupils clearly explained their views and were writing at length on their evaluations of the theory of reconstructive memory. Pupils' writing shows their ability to structure essay and examination responses with care taken over the structure and clarity of their lines of argument.
- 3.12 Pupils are successful in learning new skills because they enthusiastically engage in a wide range of enrichment activities and in a variety of co-curricular activities, day trips and visits that extend their horizons. For example, all pupils take part in sports and games, many of whom develop their talent and represent Mill Hill senior school in for example, rugby, football, tennis, rounders and cricket with strong individual performances. In the arts, Year 9 and 10 pupils successfully take part in an arts award event. Many pupils take part in the UK Intermediate Mathematics Challenge with some success and join in with the many activities on offer at Mill Hill senior school and in boarding. This contributes very

effectively to their refined language skills and fluency in English and in their creative, aesthetic and physical skills.

- 3.13 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are eager to learn and curious as observed in an English lesson where they quizzically discussed English customs in 19th Century England, comparing life in England now and in their own countries, and in a business studies lesson explored ideas on tax systems in different countries across the globe. They support one another extremely well whilst taking full responsibility for their own learning. They are collaborative, co-operative and persevere to achieve their potential, working together for example, to solve mathematical equations in a mathematics lessons for example and in physics in exploring examples of different types of energy. They are prepared to take appropriate risk realising that identifying mistakes is a way to improve. For example, in English language lessons, pupils asked questions to help them improve their pronunciation and intonation and to ensure understanding in how to use words and phrases in context showing their determination to improve their fluency in English. In questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of pupils agree that they are encouraged to think and learn for themselves and that teachers help them to make progress. As a result, pupils are well-prepared for next steps and are successful in securing a sixth form places at competitive schools of their choice. Governors and senior leaders are highly successful in ensuring that the educational needs of the pupils remain consistently at the forefront of their planning so that pupils improve their fluency in English and achieve extremely well in their examinations.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils display increased levels of self-confidence and develop a reflective approach towards their life in school. They embrace the challenges set before them and as their fluency in English increases, they manage their commitments successfully, understanding the need for a balanced lifestyle, where academic and extra-curricular complement each other. They reflect positively on their learning, becoming more aware of their strengths and identifying which areas to focus on to improve, ably supported by teachers and boarding staff. In addition, pupils confirmed that lessons in personal, social, health education (PSHE) on well-being, motivation and resilience, developing skills for learning and for life, exploring topics such as, 'what is success for you', all positively contribute to their self-development and an overall understanding of themselves as individuals. In creating new friendships in boarding, they learn about different cultures and traditions, helping them to understand their own perspectives and those of others. Over time they become increasingly self-assured, maturing and preparing themselves well for next steps in their education and beyond.
- 3.16 In their international setting, pupils have an increasing number of decisions and choices to make as time moves forward. Pupils confirmed that in regular tutorial sessions, they discuss subject choices, which activities to choose and how they will take up new challenges, such as which team sport, how they manage boarding with new friends and their study time. They confirmed that they enjoy the new freedoms the school affords them in making choices over free time and activities. Pupils confirmed that through the challenges set for them, they have become more independent in their decision making because they understand that decisions matter. Many contributed to school council decisions in how time at weekends should be best allocated so that they have a varied programme and time to relax as well as to take part in house activities or to visit a new part of England. Living and learning in a new and different environment, has ensured that pupils understand the decisions they make, determine their futures and their personal success.
- 3.17 Pupils' spiritual understanding is enhanced through their participation in weekly chapel which celebrates all faiths and religions as well as the Christian principles in keeping with the school ethos. Pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the school's ethos as they discussed expectation in behaviour and appreciating others for who they are and in discussion groups on identity and its

uniqueness. Pupils share their customs and religious traditions within their diverse international community including celebrations at special times of the year such as Chinese New Year, Mexico's Independence Day or the Persian tradition of Nowruz. Pupils confirmed that their spiritual horizons are extended as they begin to understand not only the differences but also the common humanity that they share with those in their boarding house and in school. In a tutor session, for example, pupils discussed the idea of hope and how to keep hope in adverse situations including the importance of family, friends and community. Through the mindfulness and yoga sessions that many participate in, art and music lessons, pupils are aware of the non-material aspects of life which contributes to their well-being and overall personal development.

- 3.18 Pupils show due respect for the school rules and display a strong moral stance towards others in their own behaviour. Pupils learn from their mistakes and make amends, recognising that the rules support a positive learning culture where it is possible to try something new without fear of failure. They are prepared to listen and to learn from each other. For example, during chapel a small group of pupils gave a presentation on the Australian bush fires. This led to a deeper understanding of pupils' place in the world and they expressed how they need to work in collaboration with other elements and with each other. In their discussions on ethical fashion, pupils demonstrated increasing understanding of the moral dilemmas faced in response to climate change and for a world that recognises the reduction of waste. In their boarding houses, they work together to ensure that the community spirit of inclusion is upheld and that all have a sense of belonging. They confirmed that the boarding experience, contributes to their language learning and that in respecting the rules this demonstrates their consideration for others.
- 3.19 Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative and co-operative skills. They work effectively for common goals across the co-curricular programme in sport, music and drama as well as in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and Friday leadership activities. Through the school council pupils gauge opinion from their peers and make contributions to the agenda so that pupils' voice is heard and communicated effectively. For example, pupils were able to make suggestions that led to a change in the organisation of weekend activities. Pupils organise frequent fundraising such as non-uniform days in aid of a national charity for the elderly, summer fairs and other money-raising activities to support projects who build schools across the world. Pupils engage in community service such as the digital inclusions sessions helping older people with their use of technology, gaining greater understanding of the difficulties they may face. In questionnaires pupils confirmed that they readily help and support others, and all parents agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills.
- 3.20 Pupils confirmed that they know how to stay safe physically and online and realise the need to be physically and mentally healthy from their e-safety lessons and discussions in tutorials. This is because governors and leaders have ensured a well-balanced health programme including sports and a wide choice of activities. Pupils have a clear sense of their mental and physical well-being and take part in regular physical exercise, and others enjoy mindfulness or yoga sessions. All pupils have access to a number of staff, including tutors, boarding staff, nurses, and the pastoral team should they wish to discuss any matters relating to their well-being. In discussion, pupils confirmed that they appreciate that staff support them in their learning and in exploring all that the school and boarding provides for them. They enjoy the activities and range of sports on offer, and the opportunities to have new challenges that contribute to their overall highly positive experience in the school.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended tutor sessions and chapel. 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 Flora Bean | Reporting inspector |
| Mr Giles Brand | Compliance team inspector (Bursar, GSA school) |
| Mr Anthony Nelson | Team inspector (Deputy head, SofH school) |
| Mrs Yvonne Silk Jones | Team inspector (Director of studies, ISA school) |
| Mrs Elizabeth Bassett | Team inspector for boarding (Housemistress, HMC school) |