



EDINBURGH  
**STEINER**  
SCHOOL

**Standards and Quality Report  
2019**

## **Vision statement**

Edinburgh Steiner School aspires to develop responsible, creative and freethinking young people, who will contribute to society and a sustainable environment with vision and purpose.

## **Mission statement**

Inspired by the pedagogical insights of Rudolf Steiner, we commit daily to awakening the mind, will and spirit of each individual pupil.

### **1. School aims**

- To provide a high quality pedagogical service and a welcoming, secure, happy and caring environment for all
- To recognise and support each stage of child development and to deliver an age appropriate curriculum that underpins this
- To recognise that rhythm, kinaesthetic learning and movement are integral parts of the curriculum
- To address the learning needs of all pupils
- To acknowledge the importance of non-formal and informal learning
- To encourage personal, social and moral development for the children and staff in the school
- To provide a child-friendly, aesthetically beautiful environment, where learners are encouraged to know and love the world and where each child's innate abilities are allowed to blossom
- To enable children to take responsibility for their own learning in an environment of peace and mutual respect
- To develop self-reliance, rigour and resilience
- To embrace all people regardless of race, religion or gender
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to foster a sense of community
- To support and encourage staff development and CPD and demonstrate a commitment to improvement in all areas
- To continue to foster links with outside agencies, mainstream schools and the wider community

## 2. The school in context

Edinburgh Steiner School is located in the Southwest of Edinburgh and was opened in 1939.

The School's client group mainly comprises people from multicultural, professional backgrounds from a broad catchment area.

The School is situated in four different buildings, plus a purpose-built hall and Kindergarten; a former coach house is in the process of being renovated to provide new classrooms and craft spaces.

The Kindergarten is registered to accommodate 60 children from 3 to 7 years old. The roll in October 2019 was 33. There are 10 children who have an ASP in kindergarten. These are as follows:

- 2 children with ASPs for EAL
- 2 children with ASPs for Social/emotional/behavioural issues
- 2 children with ASPs for EAL + Social/emotional/behavioural issues
- 2 children with an ASP for Speech and language development
- 2 children with an ASP for Allergy/intolerance/medical needs

In October 2019, the main school had 12 classes (year groups) varying in size from 12 to 27 pupils, which provide education for young people aged 6-18 years. The school roll was 258. Being a small school, teachers, pupils and parents know and appreciate one another. There is mutual support and recognition of both strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers and other staff work autonomously within a framework of guidance and support provided by the ethos and curriculum of the international Steiner/Waldorf framework. Key decisions are made by consensus at a weekly meeting of the College of Teachers—a committee that performs the traditional function of a principal teacher. Decisions are then acted upon by a rotating Management Group, supported by a Management Team. Colleagues feel free to help and challenge one another, and frequently do so. The effect of this is a sense of greater participation and ownership of issues and decisions.

The School has a broad-based curriculum where head, heart and hand are addressed in equal measure. Pupils are not judged solely on academic achievements, but are equally valued for their social, moral, spiritual and practical abilities.

Parents are encouraged to be committed to the School and be pro-active: by being Class Convenors, serving on the Board of Trustees, taking part in workweeks, Christmas Market, concerts, clubs and wider school issues such as cycling proficiency.

### **3. Factors affecting the development of the school**

- The ethos of the school is based on the premise that people are as important as policies, if not more so.
- Formal literacy and numeracy programmes do not begin until the child is six and a half-years-old (Class 1). The School does not select pupils on the basis of academic ability.
- ICT does not feature in the School's curriculum or teaching methodology until the late Middle School and Upper School.

#### 4. Attendance, attainment and progress (2018-2019)

2018-19 (30th August 2018 - 3rd July 2019)											
	Total Periods	Present		Late		Authorised Absence		Unauthorised Absence		Kindy Rest Day	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Kindergarten	5826	5207	89.4	200	3.4	414	7.9	44	0.8	662	10
Class 1	2950	2822	95.7	55	1.9	110	4.2	14	0.5	0	
Class 2	3263	3144	96.4	50	1.5	112	3.6	7	0.2	0	
Class 3	2683	2513	93.7	128	4.8	165	6.3	5	0.2	0	
Class 4	2837	2685	94.6	72	2.5	148	5.4	4	0.1	0	
Class 5	3940	3723	94.5	110	2.8	214	5.5	3	0.1	0	
Class 6	3080	2889	93.8	83	2.7	186	6.2	4	0.1	0	
Class 7	1957	1794	91.7	97	5	115	6	3	0.2	0	
Class 8	2267	2049	90.4	187	8.2	190	8.8	9	0.4	0	
Class 9	3195	2885	90.3	268	8.4	271	9.1	19	0.6	0	
Class 10	3365	3093	91.9	183	5.4	266	8	4	0.1	0	
Class 11	2394	2155	90	151	6.3	217	9.3	6	0.3	0	
Class 12	3660	2867	78.3	167	4.6	671	20.1	64	1.7	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	41417	37826	91.3	1751	4.2	3079	7.9	186	0.5	663	

## Exam results 2019

Edinburgh Steiner School											
Year Group	Total Pupils in Year	Examination	Number of Candidates	Total Present'ns	A	B	C	D	U		
Class 12	22	Adv Highers	4	4	1	3	0	0	0		
		Highers	22	71	35	13	9	10	4		
Class 11	14	National 5	5	16	8	3	2	1	2		
		GCSE			9	8	7	6	5	4	3
Class 10	15	National 4	3	5	5	0					
		National 5	15	48	34	7	4	2	1		

The Higher exam results in 2019 were good, but lower in some categories than in recent years. The school number of presentations at Higher Grade (71) was slightly lower, but high compared to the 44 presentations made in 2017. The headline A-C pass rate for Highers was 81.6%, well above the national average pass rate of 74.8%, but a significant drop from 2018. This is not yet a trend. The 5-year running mean remains at about 89%, and this year's headline figure might be explained in relation to the changes made to National Qualifications in 2018-2019 (which is reflected in the drop in the national pass rate) as well as the range of ability levels in what was a large Class 12. It was encouraging to note that the percentage rate of 'A' grades remained very high (49.3%). The percentage of A and B grades at Higher was 67.6%, also historically high. The big change was in the number of 'D' grades, which rose to over 10%. The number of 'fail' grades (U) remained low, as it has been for the last few years. National 5 results remained very good, with an A-C pass rate of over 85% and over 50% of all results graded 'A'. Our GCSE results (based on the new, more demanding, GCSE exams) remain excellent, with a 5-year mean pass rate of 84% (pass is equivalent to a level '4' under the new system, or a 'C' under the old system). The national (U.K.) average pass rate was 68% for the same five year period.

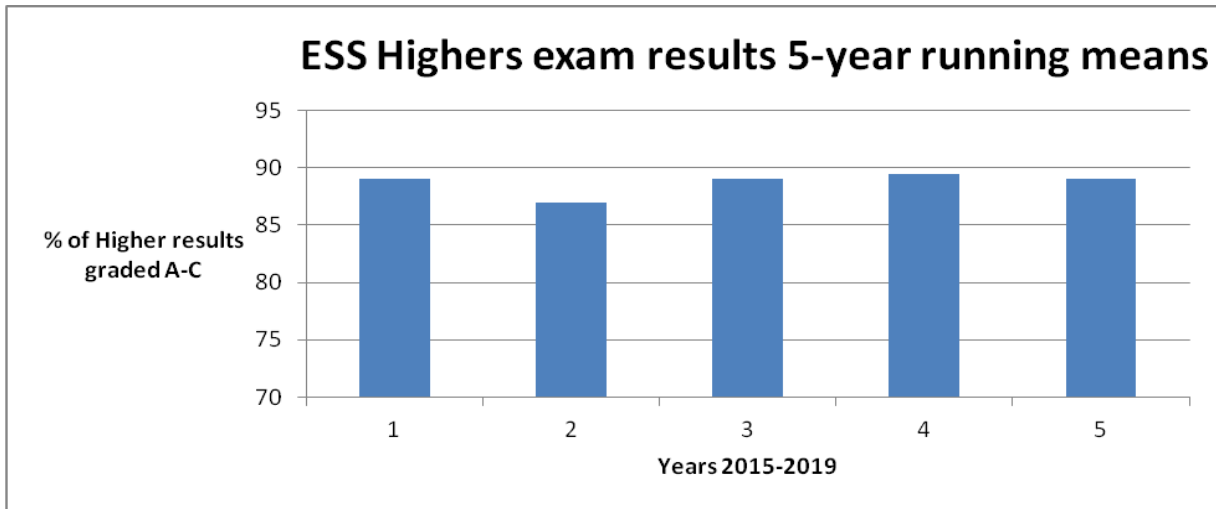


Figure 1: Higher exam results 5-year running means (i.e. year 5, 2019, is compiled by averaging the results from 2015-2019 inclusive)

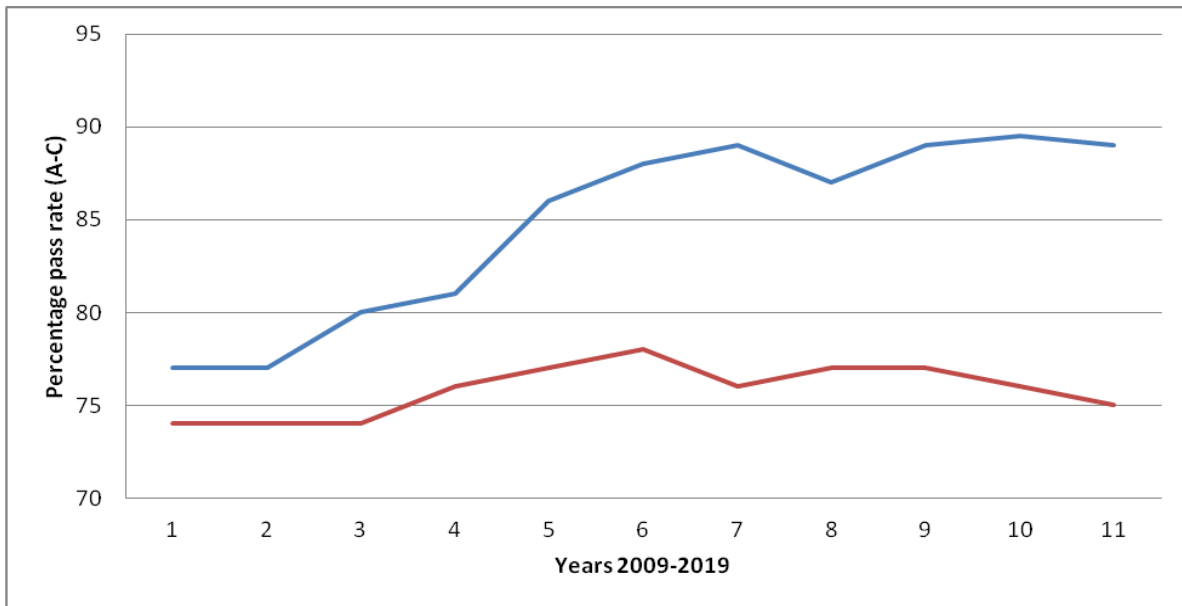
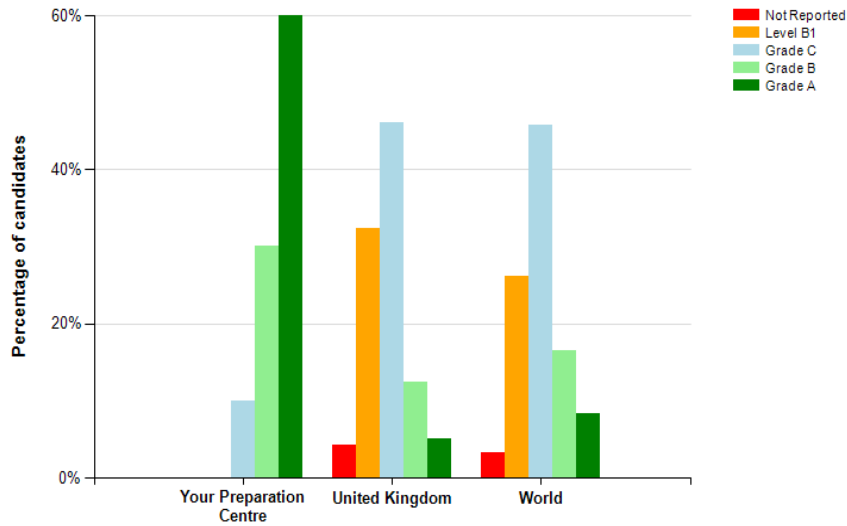


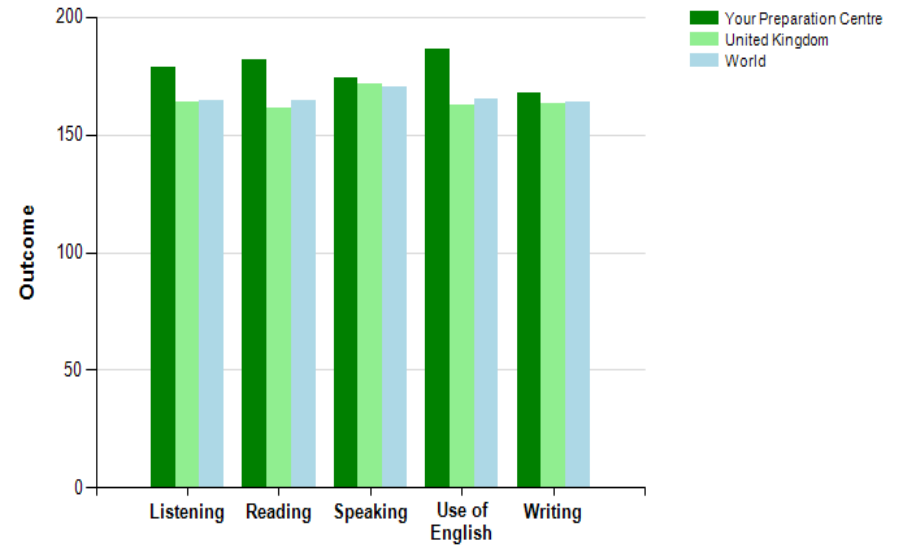
Figure 2: trend against national pass rate: blue line, ESS Higher exam A-C pass rate, year by year 5-year running mean; red line, national pass rate by individual year

# Exam results (EAL) 2016-2019

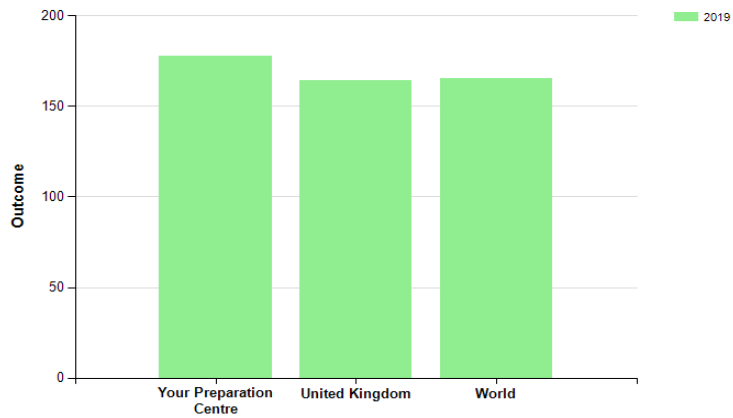
**Group Grade Distribution Comparisons for First (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)**



**Group Skills Comparisons for your preparation centre Year(s): 2019, 2020**



**Average Cambridge English Scale Score by year & group for First**





## 5. Progress and achievement

### Early Years (including Kindergarten)

- Early Years practitioners have worked on including and supporting the assistants: bringing child protection/GIRFEC updates to all staff at our weekly meetings, encouraging assistants to participate more in external trainings and share this with staff group; asking them to take responsibility for small groups of children, for example when the teachers work with the older children in transition group. Assistants have also taken on specific responsibilities within the Early Years. All this has helped to develop the confidence of the assistants, enabled the teachers to feel more supported, and led to more consistency of approach across the three groups.
- A 'floating' assistant is now available in Kindergarten, who covers for any staff who are absent, and/or lends support to any teacher where needed. This has meant that support can be given to particular children when necessary; enabling the teacher to continue to work consistently with the whole group. It has also led to more consistency of staffing generally.
- The learning support procedure for kindergarten children was clarified, and teachers were supported well in reviewing places for children on trial periods. At the end of the year we reviewed the input received from Support for learning staff, leading to a request for more time allocated to this work.
- It has long been an ambition of the School that access to a Steiner education should not depend solely on the ability to pay fees. Parents are now able to meet the costs of Kindergarten fees and wraparound care through the UK-government scheme Tax Free Childcare, reducing the cost by 20 percent for many children under P1 age; as well as reducing the cost of after-school care for older children.
- The Kindergarten took part in Edinburgh Doors Open in September 2019. About 100 people from around Edinburgh and beyond visited on the Saturday and were able to look around the Kindergarten and the new Coachhouse.
- The decision to charge per family instead of per child in Parent & Child groups was made in autumn 2019.
- There was a two-day visit to all our teachers from the Steiner/Waldorf Early Years adviser. This helped teachers and assistants to reflect on their practice, and led to some changes, for example in daily rhythm, to enable children to better access the curriculum. Help was also given on ways of working with particular children. And a parents' evening was offered by the adviser, to all EY families.
- The School applied for a variation to our registration with the Care Inspectorate, as we want to be able to take children from when the local authority funding begins, at age 3. The School is now registered for children aged 2 upwards, with a restriction of no more than 10 places for 2 year olds (February 2020).

- Continued to support and mentor a practitioner who is working to complete her Steiner/Waldorf kindergarten training.
- Set up a small 'outdoor' group among the staff to look at how we use the outdoor space. This led to a raised vegetable bed being created and planted up in the garden; and two wagons have been bought for garden use.
- Reviewed our planning and observation paperwork, so that methods of recording are clear and consistent across all groups, for staff and families.
- A number of improvements have been made to the fabric of the Kindergarten building by the maintenance department to ensure the building is weather proof.
- The Early Years Development Group was asked to reform by the College of Teachers in December 2019 to consider whether the School should be part of the national '1140 hours' programme.
- Funding was agreed to training a member of staff to lead the Playgroup ahead of plans to register the Playgroup, something which will allow it to expand and extend its hours.

## **Lower School**

- Where possible, parents are now sent a curriculum overview at the start of the session. This includes an outline of main lessons, projects, trips and who will be teaching the Class. In some cases, the underlying purpose of the lesson content is explained but the main idea is to give parents an idea of what lies ahead for their children. This provision has been introduced to meet the School's commitment to better communication.
- A large number of Lower School pupils participated in the whole school production of Oliver! The production was a huge success, drawing large audiences of two nights of public performance.
- There is an evident need for our pupils to engage in meaningful activities beyond the school day. In response, the School extended its provision of after-school clubs, and brought them under one umbrella. These clubs, which now include drama, musical theatre, chess, and yoga (adding to the existing programme of circus skills offered to Classes 3-4 / Classes 5-6 and Classes 7-8) dove-tail the end of the school day. It is hoped this will be both enriching for the children attending them, and convenient for parents.
- The TLC (teaching and learning community) has continued to research into 'technology' and the modern child, and the appropriate use of technology in the Lower School. The College of Teachers established a Working Group to consider 'computer literacy' in the School, including enhanced opportunities for the appropriate use of technology for pupils in the Middle School.

- A pilot was launched for the Integrated Education Certificate, a qualification merging from the ACTS project. This involved a majority of the pupils in Class 8, who took the 'Individual Project' module via their Class 8 project. Several of these pupils have gone on to pursue the full certificate in Class 9.
- Seasonal Kids Ceilidhs were made free to the School community, and opened up to public. Sponsored by Christmas Market Fund, it is now hosted by Edinburgh Steiner School in the School Hall, with live music and professional Caller. As a day event, it is aimed at Early Years and Lower School children, enhancing the social aspect of our community school.
- In 2019, Class 8 performed a vibrant version of *Alice in Wonderland* as their Class 8 play. Every member of the Class participated in some aspect of the production.

## Upper School

- The Student Council was fully established during 2019. This initiative was led by Upper School Class Guardians and pupil representatives from each Class. It met regularly throughout 2019. A number of letters were exchanged between the Council and the College of Teachers; ideas were shared and initiatives pursued. Members of the SC met with College and Education Scotland during their visit in December 2019. Education Scotland was extremely supportive of the idea of a Student Council.
- With support from the Spending Group (Christmas Market funds), a new drama club was established on the initiative of Upper School pupils. The founders were interested in learning about a range of theatrical and performance-related techniques and skills, including lighting, costume and set design. They appointed an adult instructor, financed by the Spending Group, and performed their first show, which they wrote and produced themselves, in the summer of 2019.
- The extra-curricular programme for Upper School pupils was extended to include Computer Coding, drama, a Climate Awareness Group and Student Council. This is in addition to the existing Basketball Club and Duke of Edinburgh awards.
- The Climate Change Group: older pupils are engaging with pupils in the younger years of the School. They hosted a stall showcasing eco alternatives at Christmas Market, an annual event attended by 2,000 people from the school community and wider public. Other projects are underway to make the campus more environmentally kind.
- Visiting pupil numbers have remained high and stable. Many of our visitors come as a result of recommendations from pupils who have been to our school before. On average, 3-4 visiting students per term sit a Cambridge exam while here. Exam results in EAL (English as an Additional Language) overall continue to be extremely strong (see above).
- The 2019 exam results were good, but not quite as strong this year as in recent years (see above). They remained very strong at GCSE level.

- Class 12 performed a heart-warming production of *The Princess Bride*, mixing fantasy, folklore, song and movement to great effect.
- Class 12 also enjoyed a successful Class 12 Trip to Corsica where they worked, prepared for the play and experienced the unique culture of the island.
- Class 9 performed their version of Dracula. Every member of the Class participated.
- Pupil numbers in the Upper School continue to be high and stable (approximately 80; the exact number fluctuates with the arrival and departure of overseas students).
- In consultation with the Student Council, who, like teachers and parents are concerned about some pupils smoking near the school, a duty rota was introduced in December 2019 and teachers now patrol outside near the school at break and lunchtimes.

## **Whole school**

- Based on advice and continuing support from Education Scotland, the School's structure for managing Child Protection and safeguarding has been revised and clarified. A 'Pupil Support' group, with clear lines of accountability, now coordinates all aspects of pupil support, including pastoral care. This should ensure that no issue relating to pupil welfare ever 'falls through the gaps.'
- Training was provided for all staff by Crew 2000 (experts in the use and misuse of substances). Contact has been maintained with Crew and the School's intention is to arrange further, targeted training for staff as well as advisory work.
- ISAMS, the School's data management system has now been operating for a year and continues to expand, with new modules being added to simplify complex data management tasks for administrators, parents and teachers. For the first time in 2019 parents received reports via the Parent Portal and this transition was successful. ISAMS allows the School to be GDPR compliant and should continue to make communication more efficient, in line with the commitments made in 2018.
- The Coach House conversion was completed and is now in use. There has been universal praise for this development, which has been recognised with an architectural accolade. Class 11 and 12 Classrooms are now in the Coach House, as well as two arts and crafts spaces. This has freed up space elsewhere in the School, putting less pressure on teachers and pupils.
- The School engaged with Nobel laureate and Waldorf graduate Professor Thomas Sudhof, in the form of an interview following his appointment as Patron of ACTS, as well as a signed bassoon that will be hung on campus. This artefact will continue to help pupils at Edinburgh Steiner School appreciate the trans-disciplinary nature of a Steiner curriculum.
- Thanks to funding from the Spending Group (Christmas Market funds), a new mono-block path was laid to the new Coach House; a new insect-friendly garden planted in front of Edinholme; and a variety of new equipment and learning resources made available throughout the School. The Christmas Market in November 2019 was a huge success: it was very well organised and attended and raised thousands

of pounds for the Spending Group, a proportion of the funds from which will, from now on, go towards the ongoing Growing Spaces project.

- An exhibition, Edinburgh Steiner in 80 Objects, celebrated the School's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May 2019. This is being developed into a Steiner Waldorf Education in 100 Objects book, due to be printed as part of the global centenary celebrations. It will support the School's Open Tours and Learn About Our Education events (e.g. at the Christmas Market in November and Doors Open Day in September).
- Good relationships have been maintained between the School and its regulatory body (inspectorate), Education Scotland, with a QUIPE visit in spring 2019, which led to a positive report, and a follow-up visit in December 2019. Education Scotland will write to College and parents early in 2020.
- The Edinburgh Steiner Teacher Education Course (ESTEC) continues to work with the GTCS in relation to the recognition of a part-time, post graduate qualification in Steiner Education which will enable students to register with the GTCS in a Steiner Teachers category. In 2019 the University of Edinburgh agreed to act as a credit-rating body for the course.
- The School continued to develop a growing presence on social media, with coordinated links between items in the Tuesday Notice and sites such as Facebook. The Alumni Association, established last year, is an important part of our School community and social media is a good way to maintain links with former parents, pupils and teachers—many of whom continue to participate in school events such as plays and concerts.
- During 2019 the Estates Group has completed a number of medium-sized projects, including the installation of electrical systems and emergency fire systems, including lighting; a new floor in Class 9; improvements to the fabric of the Kindergarten; new garden furniture; the removal of damaging beech trees from the front of the School; adding finishing touches to the grounds around the newly restored Coach House; and regular leaf blowing during the autumn help manage this annual task.

## 6. Summary of key priorities (Improvement Plan)

- To review and revise the Outings Procedure and associated policies and procedures according to the recommendations made in the Working Group report from Andrew Phethean and Charlotte Willson.
- Growing Spaces Project: where possible, to continue the ongoing implementation of a series of development initiatives across the campus. Working within the constraints of the existing site, proposals include the renovation and extension of existing buildings and the rationalisation of available spaces.
- Building on the successful pilot in 2018/19, to introduce and embed, in Classes 8 and 9, the Integrated Education Certificate (a qualifications arising from the ACTS project, a partnership with schools from across the UK and Scandinavia which lasted between 2015 and 2018).
- To review the process of transition from Kindergarten to Class 1 to encourage a collaborative and holistic approach to meeting the needs of children.
- To create a Pupil Support Department to integrate a number of existing practices and procedures under the umbrella of Wellbeing to develop a more accountable, transparent and responsive structure.

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