



Scarborough College

INSPECTION AND GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

THE
GOOD
SCHOOLS
GUIDE

ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate



“Lots of Yorkshire grit creating something of an educational pearl.”

Good Schools Guide

“The school is an open and tolerant community, where pupils approach their education with enjoyment and confidence.”

ISI Inspection, 2025

A Message from the Headmaster

Visitors to Scarborough College often confirm what those within our community already know and feel. The recent ISI Inspection and Report and The Good Schools Guide have done precisely that, their findings reflecting what we see every day. Scarborough College is a school defined by academic ambition, strong character and genuine “family atmosphere” (The Good Schools Guide).

At the heart of our success is the quality of education we provide. Inspectors found that “teachers demonstrate thorough subject knowledge which they use to plan stimulating and varied lessons” and that pupils “approach their education with enjoyment and confidence” (ISI).

Classrooms are purposeful but lively places, with The Good Schools Guide noting the “buzz in lessons” that characterises learning here.

From Prep School through to the IB Diploma, academic depth is combined with breadth, independence and a global perspective.

Small classes and specialist teaching ensure that pupils are known well and guided carefully towards excellent outcomes.

Academic success is only one side of our story. Opportunity beyond the classroom is equally central to life at the College.

Through sport, the performing arts, outdoor education and leadership roles, pupils are encouraged to participate fully and discover their potential. Character is not left to chance and resilience, kindness and responsibility are cultivated deliberately and consistently.

Pastoral care underpins everything we do. We are ambitious for our pupils, but we are equally committed to their wellbeing.

Boarding is a particularly distinctive strength and Scarborough College is bucking the national trend as increasing numbers of pupils choose to board. Houses are welcoming and homely, reinforcing the close-knit community that lies at the heart of the school, and our boarding staff “prioritise the wellbeing of the boarders they care for” (ISI).

Both reports reveal a school with momentum and purpose. They confirm what we already know: Scarborough College offers far more than a set of results. It offers an education grounded in high standards, personal attention and a belief that young people thrive when care, ambition and opportunity go hand in hand.

Guy Emmett

ABOUT THE ISI REPORT AND THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

- The ISI Report (2025) confirms that all regulatory standards are met across leadership, education, wellbeing, safeguarding and governance. This is a mandatory inspection for all independent schools in the UK, and as such the language used is purposefully measured.
- The Good Schools Guide provides an independent qualitative evaluation, highlighting the school’s culture, leadership, academic breadth and pupil experience. Schools are approached to participate in The Good Schools Guide. This is the first time that this prestigious organisation has inspected Scarborough College.

Our Key Strengths

Scarborough College's strengths lie in the distinctive balance it achieves between academic ambition, strong pastoral care and a breadth of opportunity that extends far beyond the classroom.

Academic life is centred on high expectations and intellectual curiosity. Pupils benefit from small class sizes and specialist teaching, allowing them to be known well and supported individually. The Sixth Form's International Baccalaureate programme provides both academic depth and global perspective, preparing pupils for university and life beyond school.

Inspectors observed that **"pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work,"** reflecting a culture in which scholarship is valued and achievement is expected.

Pastoral care is a defining strength of the College and underpins every aspect of school life. The ISI Report highlights the school's **"robust safeguarding culture,"** noting that **"pupils are provided with careful pastoral support."**

This commitment to wellbeing is felt throughout the community.

As The Good Schools Guide observed, **"this is a school where we saw a lot of evidence that every child is known and cared for personally."** Pupils benefit from strong relationships with staff and from a supportive environment in which they feel secure, included and able to thrive.

As The Good School Guide says **"Boarding here is a real success story",** with boarding houses described as, **"amongst the most comfortable and homely boarding we have seen,"** reflecting the warm, family atmosphere that characterises school life.

Pupils quickly develop a strong sense of belonging, supported by attentive house staff and a close-knit community.

The College's coastal setting also shapes its character. Outdoor education, including the popular surf academy, encourages pupils to develop resilience and confidence while embracing what The Good Schools Guide calls the school's distinctive **"Yorkshire grit."** Together with a rich programme of sport, arts and extracurricular activity, these experiences help pupils grow not only academically, but as confident, capable and well-rounded individuals.

OVERVIEW

- Strong leadership and governance with clear oversight and strategic direction.
- A broad, inclusive curriculum that supports both academic success and personal development.
- An open, tolerant and inclusive school community where pupils feel confident and supported.
- Impressive boarding provision described as comfortable, homely and increasingly popular.
- A distinctive school ethos that blends academic ambition with resilience, character and a love of the outdoors.
- A family-oriented all-through school that pupils love.



It offers a good academic education, very strong pastoral care and cracking sporting and extracurricular opportunities."

Good Schools Guide



“Teachers demonstrate thorough subject knowledge which they use to plan stimulating and varied lessons .”

ISI Inspection, 2025

Academic Success

From the earliest years of the Senior School, pupils are encouraged to engage actively in their own learning.

Classrooms are designed to support this approach: The Good Schools Guide notes that the College benefits from **“pleasant, bright and airy classrooms... well equipped and a good learning environment.”**

Within these spaces there is a clear culture of purposeful scholarship where questioning, reflection and independence are expected.

Reviewers commented that there is **“no passivity in classrooms,”** reflecting the active engagement of pupils with their studies.

High-quality teaching is central to this environment. Inspectors report that **“teachers demonstrate thorough subject knowledge which they use to plan stimulating and varied lessons,”** and that they **“routinely adapt their teaching and support the individual needs of pupils.”** As a result, pupils display **“responsible and thoughtful attitudes to their learning”**.

The ISI Report confirms that pupils achieve well in their GCSE and IB examinations and, throughout the school, **“pupils make good progress in their work and are prepared well for the next stages of their education.”**

In the Sixth Form, the commitment to the International Baccalaureate defines the academic experience. The Good Schools Guide recognises that the College **“invests heavily in post-16 teaching”** ensuring that pupils benefit from specialist staff and small classes across a nearly full range of IB subjects. The IB Diploma Programme provides both breadth and depth, encouraging critical thinking, independent research and global awareness. It is academically demanding by design and prepares pupils exceptionally well for university and future careers.

Academic success at Scarborough College is therefore not accidental. It is the result of expert teaching, purposeful learning environments and careful attention to each pupil’s development. The findings of both inspections show what we see every day: young people achieving success because they are taught well and supported thoughtfully.

OVERVIEW

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well at GCSE and IB Diploma level.
- Performance at GCSE is above that of comparable schools, with strong and consistent IB outcomes.
- The Sixth Form offers an academically rigorous, fully IB-based programme, supported by specialist teaching and small class sizes.
- Significant investment in post-16 education ensures breadth of subject choice and high-quality specialist delivery.
- Pupils are described as engaged, proactive learners with “no passivity in classrooms”.

Extracurricular Programmes

Opportunity beyond the classroom is central to the formation of confident, capable young people at Scarborough College.

The ISI Report recognises that **“the school provides a broad range of extracurricular activities that enhance pupils’ personal development,”** and the breadth of opportunity is a defining feature of school life. There are plenty of extracurricular activities which help pupils to **“develop confidence and build new friendships”** (ISI).

Sport is played at a high level, particularly in cricket, rugby and hockey, yet participation remains a core principle. As pupils themselves explain, **“there’s plenty of B teams so everyone gets a go at fixtures if they want.”**

The College’s growing reputation for sporting excellence and the impact of specialist coaching and this ambitious focus is one of the reasons that in recent years over 40 Scardeburgians have represented their country in a variety of sports and age groups.

The school’s coastal setting also offers distinctive opportunities through the Surf Academy and outdoor education programmes. Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips and adventurous activities, from ski trips in Europe to activity weeks and outdoor challenges in the UK, helping to cultivate the resilience and determination that The Good Schools Guide describes as **“real, as well as metaphorical, Yorkshire grit.”**

The performing arts are equally vibrant with well equipped and specialist facilities and teachers. With **“over 100 peripatetic music lessons each week in up to 20 different instruments,”** alongside major drama productions, concerts and LAMDA examinations, pupils are encouraged to perform, collaborate and develop creative confidence. Together with a wide range of clubs and societies — many initiated by pupils themselves — these experiences foster leadership, teamwork and initiative, ensuring that pupils discover talents and passions well beyond the classroom.

OVERVIEW

- A broad and stimulating extracurricular programme supports pupils’ confidence, leadership and friendships.
- National reputation for sport but still inclusive - sport is not just for the elite
- A rich performing arts provision with extensive music tuition, drama productions and LAMDA participation.
- Pupils benefit from trips, outdoor education and leadership opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom.
- The local coastal environment is used creatively to support physical wellbeing and character development.
- Pupils develop confidence and build new friendships when they participate in the extracurricular activities.



“No classroom should be confined to four walls.”



“[A] school where we saw a lot of evidence that every child is known and cared for personally.”

Good Schools Guide

Pupils' Wellbeing Support and Safeguarding

Pupils thrive when they feel secure, valued and understood. At Scarborough College, wellbeing is not an adjunct to academic life; it is the foundation upon which success is built.

The ISI Report confirms that **“leaders and staff promote pupils’ wellbeing effectively,”** reflecting a culture in which care is deliberate, structured and embedded throughout the school.

Pastoral systems are designed to ensure that every pupil is known personally and supported thoughtfully. Leaders maintain **“a visible and friendly presence around the school,”** (ISI) ensuring that pupils feel comfortable seeking guidance and support when they need it.

Inspectors also noted that **“pupils are provided with careful pastoral support”** as they progress through the school. The Good Schools Guide reinforces this picture, observing that this is **“a school where we saw a lot of evidence that every child is known and cared for personally.”**

Safeguarding is rigorous and uncompromising. The ISI highlights that leaders **“promote a robust safeguarding culture,”** supported by well-trained staff, clear procedures and a shared sense of responsibility for pupil welfare.

This reflects a culture in which care is deliberate, structured and embedded.

Beyond systems and policies, what matters most is the lived experience of pupils.

The school is described as **“an open and tolerant community where pupils approach their education with enjoyment and confidence”** (ISI).

The ISI inspectors saw that pupils themselves build a supportive culture, maintaining **“friendly and inclusive relationships with each other and with their teachers”**, ensuring that they grow not only academically, but personally and socially as well.

OVERVIEW

- Pastoral care is a clear strength, with evidence that every child is known and cared for personally.
- The school promotes pupils’ physical, mental and emotional wellbeing effectively across all age groups.
- A carefully planned PSHE and RSE programme supports pupils’ emotional health and preparation for adult life.
- Safeguarding culture is described as robust, with well-trained staff and clear systems for pupil support.

Boarding

Boarding at Scarborough College is a vibrant and integral part of school life, offering pupils a supportive and welcoming environment in which they can thrive.

The Good Schools Guide describes the provision succinctly as **“a real success story,”** noting that the College is **“bucking the national trend”** with a significant increase in the number of pupils choosing to board in recent years. This growth reflects the strength of the provision and the sense of community that boarding brings to the school.

Inspectors highlight the strong pastoral framework that underpins boarding life. The ISI report confirms that **“leaders promote boarders’ wellbeing consistently well,”** supported by staff who create a warm and inclusive atmosphere. Boarding staff are described as professionals who **“prioritise the wellbeing of the boarders they care for and look after their pastoral and academic needs carefully,”** ensuring that pupils feel secure, supported and able to flourish both in and beyond the classroom.

The boarding environment itself is a significant attraction. The Good Schools Guide notes that **“the boarding houses are beautiful,”** describing **“four gorgeous arts and crafts family villas... all well decorated and maintained, they are a real home from home.”**

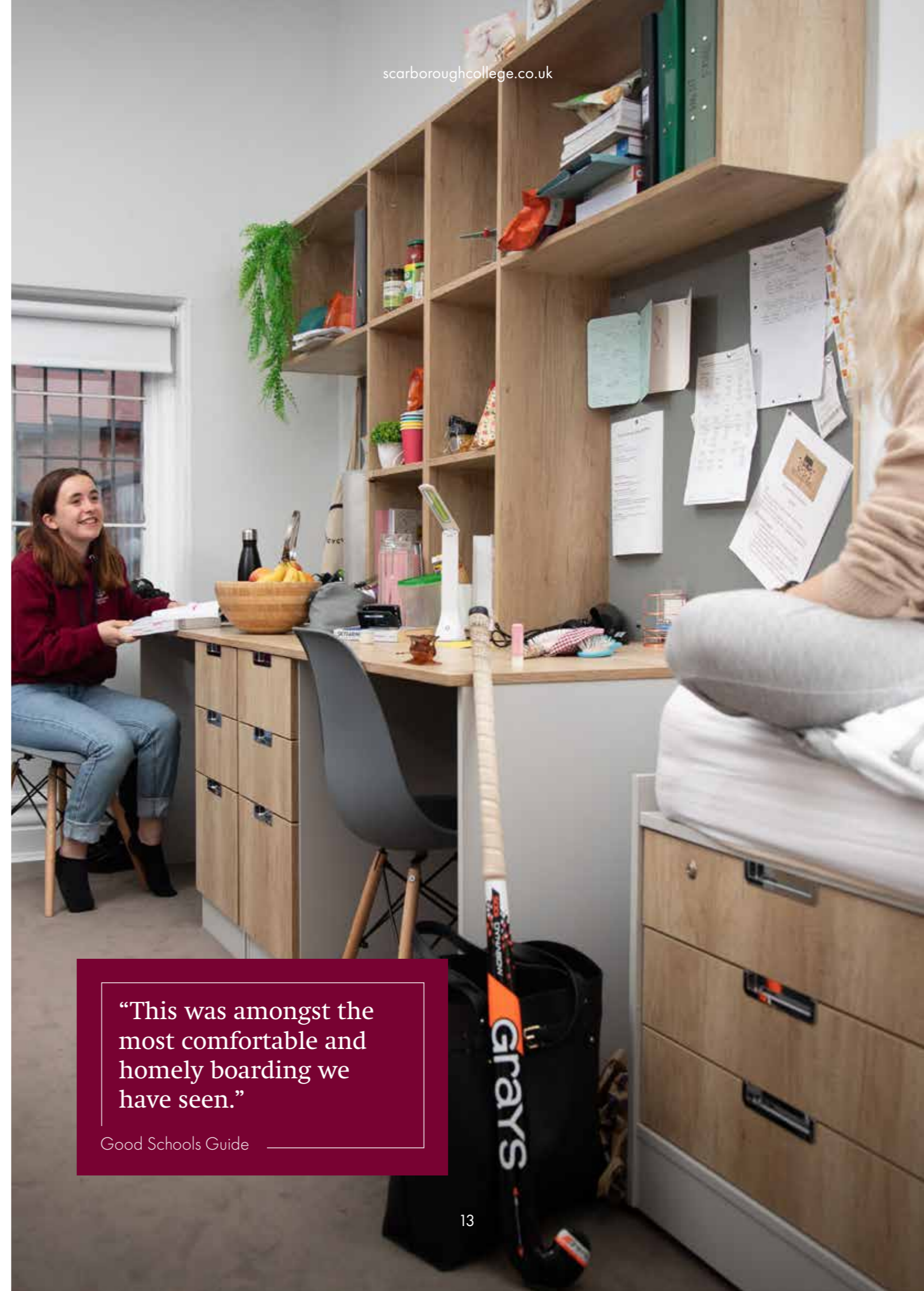
Within these houses, boarding staff **“promote inclusive and positive relationships within the boarding community,”** creating a close-knit atmosphere where pupils quickly feel they belong. New pupils are supported through **“an effective induction programme so that new boarders are quickly integrated and helped to feel part of the boarding community.”**

Life outside the classroom is equally rich. The boarding team **“run a very extensive programme of weekend activities,”** ensuring that pupils enjoy a full and varied experience.

Together, these elements create a boarding community that is welcoming, well-supported and deeply connected to the wider life of the College.

OVERVIEW

- Strong pastoral care, with leaders who promote boarders’ wellbeing consistently well.
- Inclusive boarding community, supported by a programme of activities to help new boarders settle into boarding life quickly.
- Beautiful, homely boarding houses, described as “a real home from home.”
- A thriving boarding culture, with an “extensive programme of weekend activities” and growing popularity as the number of boarding students grows.



“This was amongst the most comfortable and homely boarding we have seen.”

Good Schools Guide



“[Teachers] identify children’s individual needs and support their development of communication and language...”

ISI Inspection, 2025

Prep School

Scarborough College Prep School provides a vibrant and nurturing start to a child’s educational journey, combining strong academic foundations with rich opportunities for personal development.

The Good Schools Guide describes it as **“a secure and nurturing place for pupils to grow as they begin their journey to become well-rounded pearls.”** Led by Mr Chris Barker, described as **“warm and engaging... with a deep commitment to the school and its pupils,”** the Prep works closely with the Senior School to ensure a seamless educational pathway for pupils as they progress through the College.

The school has **“a strong record of outdoor and adventurous activities,”** and character development is central to its ethos.

As Mr Barker explains, **“We want children who are adventurous and who can confidently interact with adults.”**

This philosophy begins early, where **“Senior School’s Yorkshire Grit starts life as Yorkshire Pebbles in nursery, with a forest school and plenty of outdoor activities including surfing”.** The Guide observed that **“Yorkshire grit is definitely needed to brave the waters of the North Sea, but these kids have it in spades.”**

Academically, the Prep offers a carefully structured progression in teaching.

The school, which was purpose built in 2001, **“provides a warm and inviting environment,”** and a **“calm and productive atmosphere”** in which pupils thrive.

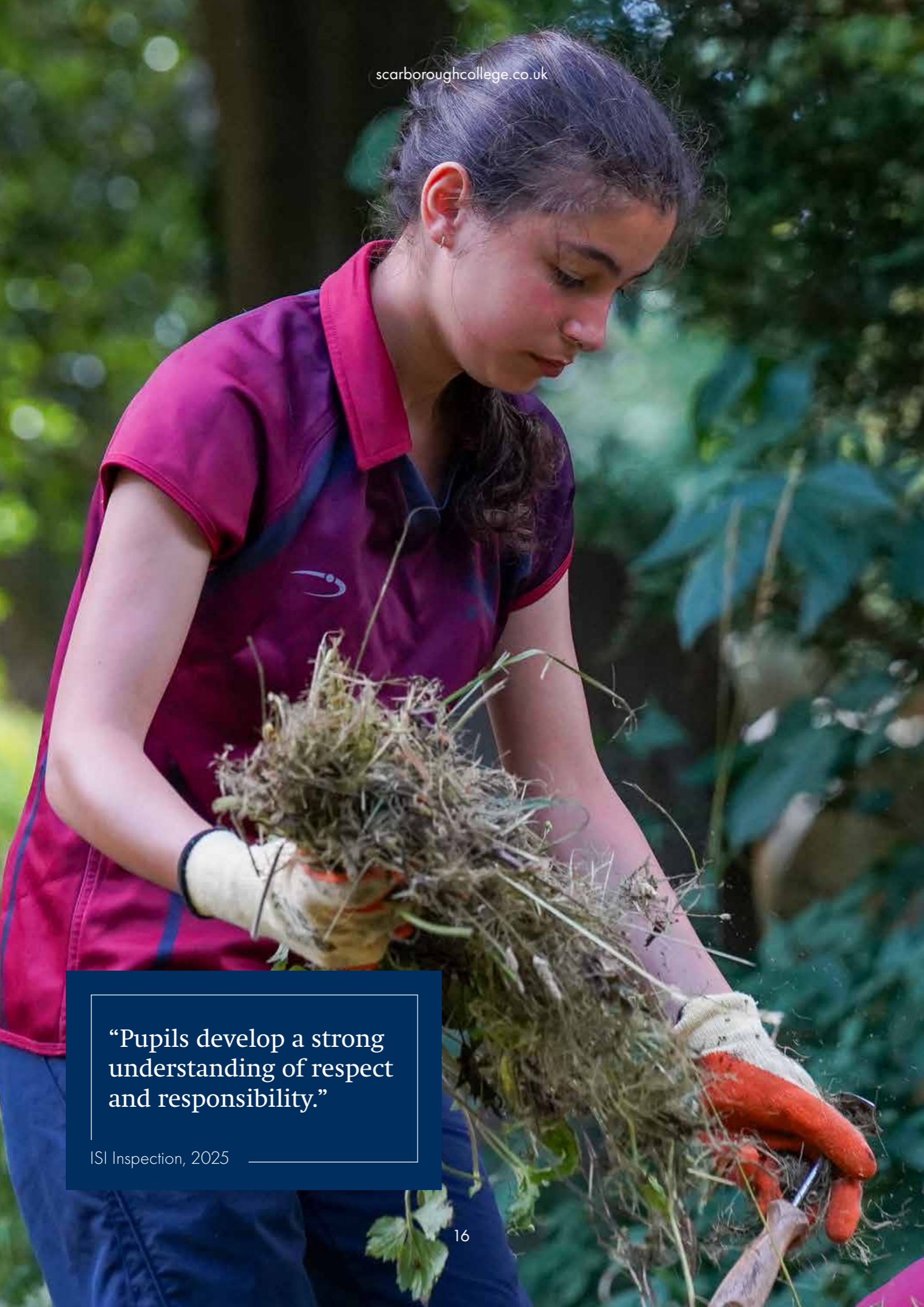
Younger pupils benefit from class teachers before moving to specialist teaching from Year 3 onwards which helps them to **“develop a deep understanding of the topics they are taught.”** In lessons observed by reviewers, **“pupils were very engaged and enthusiastic.”**

Pastoral care is another defining strength. The ISI notes that leaders provide children with **“a wide range of opportunities to develop emotionally and physically,”** encouraging them to be resilient and independent so that **“children approach their education with self-esteem and confidence.”** Parents echo this, saying pastoral care **“just gets better and better,”** and that the school **“really fosters children’s confidence and encourages them to be great communicators.”**

Together, these elements create a Prep School environment that is energetic, supportive and ambitious - one where pupils develop the confidence, skills and character needed for the next stage of their education.

OVERVIEW

- Outdoor learning and character development are central to the Prep experience through programmes such as Yorkshire Pebbles
- Specialist teaching from Year 3 onwards enables pupils to deepen their understanding across key subjects.
- Strong pastoral care and supportive relationships ensure pupils are known as individuals.
- Sport and physical activity are embedded in daily school life, with pupils encouraged to participate in a “broad and stimulating programme of sporting and physical activities.”



“Pupils develop a strong understanding of respect and responsibility.”

ISI Inspection, 2025

Contribution to Society

An excellent education also prepares young people for life in a complex and interconnected world.

At Scarborough College, this preparation is intentional, ensuring that pupils grow into thoughtful, responsible and outward-looking individuals.

ISI Inspectors note that **“pupils act responsibly, listen carefully to alternative viewpoints and show respect and kindness towards others,”** reflecting a culture in which debate is respectful, ideas are explored openly and integrity is expected.

Leadership and service are woven into everyday school life. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within the community, with the ISI observing that **“pupils are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility and to provide service to others”**.

Opportunities range from prefect and mentoring roles to supporting younger pupils, for example, supporting mathematics and games lessons in the prep school.

These experiences **“help pupils to develop leadership skills, self-confidence and a sense of social responsibility”** (ISI report).

Service also extends beyond the school gates. Leaders provide **“a range of opportunities for pupils to volunteer help and service in the local community and further afield,”** helping pupils understand the value of contributing positively to society.

Inclusion is central to this preparation for the wider world. As pupils themselves express, **“It’s totally ok to be different here.”**

The Good Schools Guide also highlights the individuality of the College’s **“broad and relatively inclusive IB programme,”** which encourages international awareness and cross-cultural understanding.

Pupils therefore leave Scarborough College not only well qualified, but equipped with the confidence, empathy and sense of responsibility needed to contribute meaningfully to the world beyond school.

OVERVIEW

- Pupils are well prepared to contribute positively to British and global society.
- Strong emphasis on respect, inclusion, tolerance and cultural understanding.
- Pupils take on leadership roles, serve as mentors and contribute through committees and community projects.
- Sixth-form pupils engage in community service as part of the IB curriculum.
- Opportunities such as Model UN, TedX, charity work and volunteering help pupils develop social responsibility and moral awareness.
- A clear commitment to contributions to society and the wider community through charitable work, usage of facilities and bursarial support.

Governance & Leadership

Scarborough College’s vision of principled leadership and effective governance has been clearly recognised through external inspection.

The ISI report notes that **“the governors work closely with senior leaders to challenge, scrutinise and support evaluation of the school’s policies, curriculum and wider educational provision”**.

Governance at the College is active and engaged; inspectors also observe that **“governors visit the school regularly to spend time with leaders, pupils and staff,”** ensuring that oversight is informed, strategic and rooted in a shared commitment to the long-term success of the school.

This close partnership between governors and senior leaders ensures that the College’s values are not merely articulated but lived daily. Leadership within the school is visible and approachable, with inspectors noting that **“leaders maintain a visible and friendly presence around the school.”**

Safeguarding and wellbeing remain central priorities, supported by what the ISI describes as a **“robust safeguarding culture.”**

The result is a community where relationships matter and where pupils are supported to flourish.

The strength of this leadership is also recognised in The Good Schools Guide, which describes the Headmaster as a **“very human leader.”**

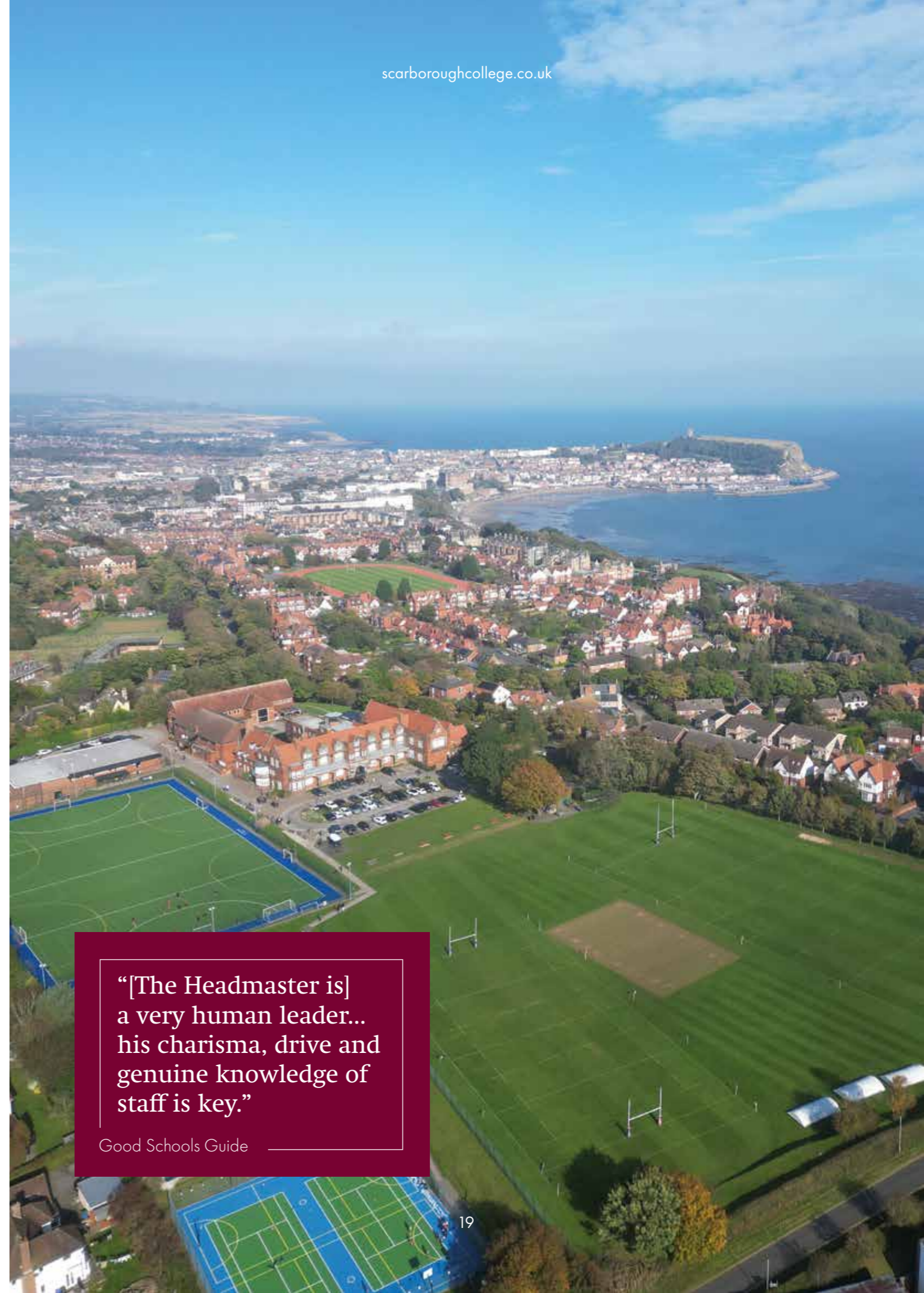
His **“charisma, drive and genuine knowledge of staff and pupils... is the key,”** creating a culture in which pupils and colleagues alike feel valued.

Reviewers also reported seeing **“several instances of very compassionate leadership of school staff,”** reinforcing the sense of a community built on trust and respect.

Together, this leadership and governance have provided the confidence and strategic clarity that underpin the College’s continued development and success.

OVERVIEW

- Governors work closely with senior leaders to provide effective challenge, support and oversight.
- Leadership is described as visible, values-driven and highly engaged with pupils and staff.
- School development is informed by consultation, evaluation and external expertise.
- Strategic investment in staff, facilities and curriculum has supported growth and sustainability.
- Governance and leadership standards are fully met and judged to be effective.



“[The Headmaster is] a very human leader... his charisma, drive and genuine knowledge of staff is key.”

Good Schools Guide



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