



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL AT LEEDS**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Grammar School at Leeds

Full Name of School	<b>The Grammar School at Leeds</b>		
DfE Number	<b>383/6112</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1048304</b>		
Address	<b>The Grammar School at Leeds Alwoodley Gates Harrogate Road Leeds West Yorkshire LS17 8GS</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01132 291552</b>		
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Email Address	<b>enquiries@gsal.org.uk</b>		
Principal	<b>Mr Michael Gibbons</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr David Gravells</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>2207</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (1248 boys; 959 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	5-11:	<b>505</b>	
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>130</b>	11-18: <b>1572</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>2207</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Anne Pickering</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>29 Mar 2011 to 30 Mar 2011</b>		
	<b>04 May 2011 to 06 May 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The school in its current form has not been inspected previously.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Grammar School at Leeds is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from three to eighteen years. Pupils in the Senior, Junior Schools and sixth form are taught on a 132-acre site on the outskirts of Leeds. The pre-preparatory department for pupils from the ages of three to seven, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is based at Rose Court, about six miles further into the city. There are currently 2204 pupils on the roll of whom 1143 are in the Senior School, with 433 in the sixth form. There are 130 children aged three to five in the EYFS. The school was constituted on the present site in 2008 following the merger of Leeds Grammar School and Leeds Girls' High School. It teaches girls and boys together up to the age of eleven, and in the sixth form. In Years 7 to 11, teaching is in single-sex classes, with groups of mixed gender for all other activities. It has a Christian foundation but welcomes pupils of all faiths or none.
- 1.2 The main school's buildings are purpose-built while Rose Court consists of a mix of buildings which adjoin sports and play facilities, with a new nursery building added recently. The school as presently constituted has not been inspected previously. The main school is based on the existing site of the boys' school with extended facilities for the Junior School, sixth form, library, music, information and communication technology (ICT), science, sport and corridors of teaching rooms and laboratories completed for the merger. The school is a charity overseen by a board of governors. The chair of governors and the head of the Junior School were appointed in 2009 and the principal was appointed in 2010.
- 1.3 The school aims to offer pupils a friendly and caring community of learning in which their abilities and talents are developed by superb teaching, and to produce confident and versatile young people, capable of high achievement and of rising to any challenge.
- 1.4 Pupils are offered places in Rose Court following informal assessment. The Junior and Senior Schools select pupils on the basis of academic ability, aptitude, attitude and potential, informed by written tests and interview. Nearly all pupils proceed from the Junior to the Senior School, constituting about half the intake in Year 7. The sixth form admits pupils on the basis of performance in GCSE and following interview. The average ability of pupils is above the national average with the majority of pupils in Years 7 to 11 demonstrating above or far above average abilities.
- 1.5 Most pupils come from Leeds and the surrounding area, and are mainly, but not exclusively, from professional families of mixed cultural backgrounds. There are 300 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), fifteen of whom receive additional support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. One hundred and thirty-eight pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) of whom 82 receive specialist help with their learning.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The pupils' overall achievement is excellent in all age groups. They make good progress, which is rapid in Rose Court and the Junior School, and this is enabled by an excellent curriculum and programme of activities. Many pupils demonstrate excellent levels of achievement in activities, particularly in sports, and in many creative subjects especially art and design. Pupils learn effectively, notably when teaching exploits their well-developed motivational skills. They work well with others. Teaching is good and often excellent, supporting the pupils' progress. It is well-planned, and meets the needs of pupils well overall. Extended challenge for those with particular talents is not always provided consistently in the Senior School, an area of concern for some parents in response to pre-inspection questionnaires with which inspectors concurred. The best marking is detailed and gives targets for improvement but this is not consistent across all subject areas.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They show high levels of confidence and a healthy competitive spirit, encouraged by the house system, which promotes good self-motivation. Pupils demonstrate strong moral awareness, and highly developed social skills, strengthened in the Senior School by their experiences at the outdoor centre. Their cultural awareness is strong. The school is characterised by a tolerant, multi-cultural ethos, amplified through the diverse activities of the many faith groups represented. Pupils receive excellent pastoral care. Strong relationships between staff and pupils are evident at all ages. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety contribute highly effectively to their care and personal development. Those pupils who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires were positive about the school. Some felt that their views are not always heard and that sanctions and rewards are not operated fairly. Inspectors consider that the school offers many outlets for pupils to make their views known and strives to monitor the implementation of systems of rewards and sanctions.
- 2.3 Excellent governance, strong leadership and good management support the school's aims well and promote high educational standards for pupils and excellent personal development. Strong oversight is combined with imaginative and methodical planning which has resulted in the successful merger of two schools, with realistic financial commitments being made. The school conducts effective self-review, showing a clear awareness of the needs of the new institution as it moves forward. Policy making at all levels is clear. Recent initiatives to develop teaching and learning have generally resulted in stimulating teaching. However the implementation and monitoring of policies for teaching and learning is inconsistent. The school maintains excellent links with parents, who expressed strong satisfaction with the education provided by the school. Inspectors support these views. Some parents felt that the school does not encourage them to be involved in its life and work and were dissatisfied with the way their concerns are handled. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that existing strong practice in teaching is applied consistently across all the subject areas, particularly in marking and assessment, and provides appropriate challenge for especially able pupils in the Senior School.
2. Strengthen the implementation and monitoring of the policy for teaching and learning.
3. In the EYFS, develop stronger links with the local community.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 The pupils' overall achievement is excellent. The school meets most successfully its aim to produce young people capable of high achievement.

##### ***Junior School and Rose Court***

- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated. They demonstrate high levels of understanding, knowledge and skills in literacy, science and ICT. They listen attentively, reflect thoughtfully and express their ideas clearly. Whether writing their autobiography or using their imagination in composing stories, pupils use their well developed literacy skills highly effectively. Handwriting is generally of a high standard. Investigative skills are put to good use in science. Pupils at Rose Court demonstrate exceptionally high levels of skill in using ICT in literacy and number programmes, and younger Junior School pupils produce excellent results in data logging. Numeracy skills are well developed by the end of Year 2, with pupils able to explain the concept of square roots. In Years 3 to 6 they are good, but more rapid progress is limited by insufficient use of target setting in marking and limited guidance on how to improve. The pupils' achievement in music and art is high with pupils producing high quality artwork related to historical topics. Very good two-part singing was heard in a lunchtime club for Junior School pupils.
- 3.3 Pupils with LDD achieve to the best of their ability through the excellent support they receive. They take a real pride in their work, for example, describing strong writing on Romeo and Juliet as their "best ever". More able pupils in both Rose Court and the Junior School develop their skills through regular extension classes and make good use of the opportunities offered by the excellent extra-curricular provision in sport, music and drama. In an extension class, older Junior School pupils have set up a very successful mini-enterprise group which has designed, printed and marketed a logo for a T-shirt.
- 3.4 Pupils are highly successful in individual music, dance and speech and drama activities and examinations, with a large number achieving merits and distinctions. Individual pupils have been very successful in cross-country running, swimming and gymnastics. In team sports the Junior School has achieved some notable successes at local and national level in football, netball, cricket, swimming, gymnastics, cross-country running and table tennis. Recently the Year 6 netball team won the local tournament for their age group and have been at the national final of the last two years.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent, enabled by a stimulating curriculum. This level of attainment as judged indicates that pupils make rapid progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions confirms this.
- 3.6 Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life and respond well to their teachers' high expectations. Their achievement is supported by their positive attitudes to learning, and by the warm relationships they enjoy with each other and their teachers. The pupils' behaviour is excellent; they co-operate well when working in pairs or small



groups, are confident about organising their own work, achieve high standards of presentation, and are keen to show appreciation of each other's efforts.

### **Senior School**

- 3.7 Pupils achieve well across all subject areas at all ages and some reach excellent standards. Girls and boys achieve equally well in response to the particular arrangements made for their teaching in Years 7 to 11. The achievement of more able pupils and those with particular talents is good or better when teaching provides appropriate levels of challenge. More able younger pupils produce highly creative and effective writing in response to imaginative tasks such as writing diary entries in the character of William Shakespeare. Pupils with LDD or EAL participate fully in lessons and demonstrate equivalent levels of achievement to their peers, writing and participating effectively in lessons.
- 3.8 Pupils develop good knowledge, skills and understanding and in some subjects, including English, art and economics, their achievement is excellent. They articulate their ideas clearly, but in some curriculum areas the quality of their written expression is limited through overuse of worksheets which demand only short answers. Orally, pupils are highly articulate. Their reasoning skills are well developed and sometimes excellent. Pupils develop good numeracy skills, applying them effectively in scientific calculations. All pupils show good scientific knowledge and understanding and in the sixth form their achievement is outstanding. Pupils in GCSE science used practical work highly effectively to test a hypothesis.
- 3.9 Pupils use ICT well to produce computer-generated documents and manipulate photographs. Some write their own software with considerable success. In A-level design and technology (DT), pupils manufacture furniture highly successfully using three-dimensional design software for modelling. Pupils of all ages demonstrate effective creative skills, particularly in drama, music and excellent art and design.
- 3.10 Pupils perform highly successfully in instrumental and speech and drama examinations, achieving distinction at the highest grades. Many participate in national performing ensembles and theatre groups. They enjoy good levels of success in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (D of E) scheme, with a large number achieving the bronze award and a good number regularly attaining gold. Senior School pupils regularly reach the final stages of national economics competitions and science and mathematics challenges. Pupils have participated as members of the national debating team for their age. Pupils of all ages achieve national and regional representation in many sports, including athletics, cricket, diving, hockey, netball, rugby and sailing and teams reach national finals in many sports competitions, including cross country, golf, netball and tennis.
- 3.11 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008-2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE and A level have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools. They are consistently good in relation to the average for maintained selective schools. In 2010 nearly three-quarters of GCSE examinations were passed at grades A\* or A, and four-fifths of A-level results were at grades A\* to B. Performance in IGCSE examinations has been above international norms and similar to UK norms. Nearly all sixth-form leavers achieve a place at their chosen university, many at those with rigorous entry requirements. They achieve high levels of success in gaining admission to medical schools. These levels of attainment,

supported by evidence from the pupils' work, indicate that they make progress which is good for pupils of similar ability.

- 3.12 Pupils are good learners. They take responsibility for their own work, most showing strong levels of self-motivation, and are highly effective learners when teaching makes full use of this attribute. They settle quickly and most show good focus although some are easily distracted. They work co-operatively very successfully. Files and workbooks are orderly and generally well presented.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

#### ***Junior School and Rose Court***

- 3.13 The curriculum and extra-curricular activities provided in the Junior School and at Rose Court are of excellent quality. They fulfil the school's aim to enable academic excellence and provide breadth of opportunity for all. The curriculum broadly follows the National Curriculum, and is further extended by the expertise provided by specialist teaching in many subjects. It suits the ages and abilities of the pupils, enabling them all to learn and make rapid progress. Core subjects receive a good allocation of time throughout the week with skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy being fostered in both the curriculum and in activities. The allocation for the humanities in the Junior School is limited, reducing opportunities for development in this area. The school is aware of this and a recent curriculum review has resolved to increase the time allowed. Cross-curricular events, such as a recent science and engineering week, strengthen their knowledge and understanding and challenge the pupils.
- 3.14 Good opportunities to use ICT in many areas of the curriculum enable pupils to create presentations, posters and leaflets and complete data handling exercises. In the extra-curricular ICT club the pupils are introduced to various skills including animation. There are good opportunities for all pupils to participate in the wide variety of physical activities available, from cricket and athletics in class time to advanced gym and 'Yogabugs' in activity time. Opportunities for the development of the creative arts abound, with speaking competitions, drama and performances which involve all pupils and a wealth of singing groups and ensembles. The curriculum is further enhanced by trips away and visitors to the school which inspire creative writing and projects.
- 3.15 The quality of the provision for pupils with LDD and EAL is excellent with additional help given in English and mathematics enabling them to have equal access to the curriculum. Although there is no formal register of pupils with particular talents, high ability pupils both at Rose Court and in the Junior School are identified and provided with a weekly period of extension work in mathematics and English. The more able are further enriched by additional challenge both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Year 6 pupils take part in a junior enterprise scheme and talented pupils are encouraged to join an art club.
- 3.16 There is good continuity in the curriculum between the different sections of the school which ensures a smooth transition from the EYFS to Year 1 and from Rose Court to the Junior School. This is mirrored as pupils proceed from the Junior School to the Senior School. For example, French taught in the Junior School is assessed in Year 6 by specialists from the Senior School to allow appropriate setting once they enter the Senior School.

- 3.17 The extra-curricular provision in Rose Court and in the Junior School is outstanding in its quality and variety, from the 'Fit Funky Food Club' and karate to cubs and the library club. The wide range of activities encourages participation and results in much excellent achievement.

### **Senior School**

- 3.18 The school provides an excellent curriculum that is well planned, wide-ranging and enriching, together with an outstanding variety of extra-curricular activities. It meets its aim of offering a balanced education that is suitable for pupils of all ages, aptitudes and interests highly successfully. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are taught in single gender classes with the same curriculum but with varied teaching methods. A core of subjects is provided, made up of English, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language, religious studies (RS), physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). A broad range of other subjects complements this, including an additional foreign language and Latin. The humanities and expressive arts are well catered for and collectively these provide additional opportunities to develop social and study skills. All pupils have ICT lessons and there are excellent facilities in the school for the pupils' use, including in the library and sixth-form centre.
- 3.19 In Years 10 and 11, pupils continue broad and balanced study by continuing with the core subjects and selecting four options from an extensive list. Pupils in Year 9 receive considerable guidance to help them make informed choices. When pupils move into the sixth form they benefit from a wide range of option choices at A level which include Greek, psychology and government and politics. The school prides itself in catering for every combination of subject and evidence shows that they are able to do this in the vast majority of cases. The careers department provides one-to-one guidance and expertise from outside the school to provide independent advice on subject choices and university courses which pupils appreciate.
- 3.20 More able pupils and those with particular talents are catered for by effective setting in some subjects and the chance to enter national competitions. They are encouraged to engage in activities that enable them to go beyond the work required for public examinations, for example the successful production of a history journal by pupils in the history society. Schemes of work are designed with extension activities in mind but these are not always implemented fully. Pupils with LDD or EAL receive excellent support which helps them reach their full potential.
- 3.21 Pupils are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills beyond the classroom. The opportunities available through extra-curricular activities are excellent, the very wide range reflecting the contribution made by staff to the wider life of the school. Included are the scholastic, such as the philosophy society, and the more practical, such as the gardening club. The school's excellent facilities enable a wide range of physical activities. A key feature of the school's provision is the extensive use of the outdoor centre, some seventy miles away, where pupils of all ages develop leadership and teamwork skills. Three-day visits to the outdoor centre are an integral part of the curriculum and are supplemented by the opportunities provided by the Combined Cadet Force, Scout Group and the D of E Award scheme.
- 3.22 Links with the local community are developed through activities such as community service and music events with local primary schools. Pupils gain experience of the wider community by participating in the many academic and sports trips which take pupils all around the world. There are also strong links with schools and orphanages

in Malawi. Fund-raising for these and other worthwhile causes is something that involves all pupils, supported by many staff. The commitment shown results in large sums being raised which strengthen the school's ties with the local community and further afield.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.23 Teaching is good overall throughout the school, and much of it is excellent. It is characterised by excellent subject knowledge and thorough planning, where learning objectives are clearly stated. Extremely strong relationships between staff and pupils, coupled with high expectations, are common features of teaching, supporting the aims of the school. Teaching styles are generally varied and make a good use of time to maximise learning opportunities for pupils. These enable them to make good progress in acquiring knowledge and developing skills. Effective class management engenders a very positive learning environment in the school, although some incidents of low level disruptive behaviour were observed. Pupils commented that they appreciate the extra support given to them, for example by revision lessons and subject clinics.
- 3.24 Pupils with LDD and EAL receive excellent support through teaching which makes sensitive use of specific information on each pupil. They receive excellent one-to-one help from specialist teachers, and teaching assistants are used effectively to provide additional support for pupils in Years 1 to 6 within the classroom. Pupils commented that they had very close relationships with those staff giving this support and viewed them as "friends". In the Junior School and at Rose Court, the more able pupils and those with particular talents are given excellent levels of additional challenge through more extended tasks and activities; this is not yet fully developed in the Senior School. Generally, pupils are set tasks which are designed to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities through varied challenge, and this enables them to progress well.
- 3.25 Teaching fosters independent learning in many subject areas, for example in a numeracy lesson in Rose Court where pupils developed their own scales for measuring capacity. In the best teaching, opportunities for the pupils' independent investigation led to discoveries beyond the confines of the examination syllabus, for example in an extended investigation in physics where sixth-formers increased their understanding of multi-dimensional space and how it impacts on string theory. On occasions in the Senior School, an over-reliance on printed worksheets limits such opportunities for pupils to make discoveries for themselves.
- 3.26 Resources for teaching are excellent throughout the school and make significant contributions to the progress made by the pupils. They add to the excellent provision of laboratories, sports and performance facilities and teaching rooms which support learning to a high degree. Access to a wide range of sophisticated resources enables younger Junior School pupils to use data loggers in ICT and, in GCSE art, allows each pupil in a class to work in a different medium, including excellent manipulation of images through ICT. Provision for ICT is excellent and it is well used as an aid to learning. The library provision throughout the school is outstanding and the facilities are well used by the pupils.
- 3.27 Most marking is regular and detailed although in some subject areas the quality is inconsistent. Where it is excellent, it is diagnostic and informs pupils how to improve their work but, where it is less good, it can be superficial and does not offer clear advice. The school collects and analyses data from standardised assessment tests

and makes the results available to staff. For the most part, this information is used to improve pupil performance and set targets, but these procedures are not yet fully developed to maximize their effectiveness for all pupils.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. The school's aim to produce confident young people capable of rising to any challenge is met highly effectively. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate high levels of confidence, notably in Rose Court, encouraged by the school's celebration of achievement. In the final of a Junior School verse-speaking competition, all participants performed with enthusiasm and verve to their peers. The many competitive events in the Senior School, based on the house system, cover a wide range of activities, from sport to cookery. Many pupils participate keenly, developing a healthy competitive spirit and strengthening their self-esteem, particularly those who do not usually play in representative sport. This promotes the high levels of self-motivation characteristic of most pupils. A variety of assemblies, including year-group and house meetings, offer pupils opportunities to reflect on a wide range of topics linked to learning in PSHCE, such as internet safety. Faith assemblies led by pupil groups reflect the many religions represented in the school. They promote an additional range of linked activities reflecting diverse cultural identities, featuring music, fashion or food. Such events promote the tolerant, multi-cultural mix which is characteristic of the school.
- 4.2 All pupils show high levels of moral understanding. Older Junior School pupils begin to explore ethics effectively in the philosophy club and this is developed in the Senior School in RS lessons. Junior School pupils show awareness of the problems caused by racial discrimination. Pupils in the Senior School support many external groups or agencies, for example, those helping with conservation and gender issues. Pupils at Rose Court develop an early understanding of ecological issues through bulb planting and developing a school garden. Pupils participate very well in discussions on moral issues with high levels of perception for their age, for example in a history lesson when they discussed the morality of politicians and compared communist and capitalist approaches to religion.
- 4.3 The pupils' excellent social development is demonstrated in their high standards of behaviour, promoted by the school's demanding expectations. Although the school does not formally monitor senior pupils' development in PSHCE lessons, it provides good opportunities for them to demonstrate the skills they acquire. This is a significant element in visits to the outdoor centre, where pupils are informally assessed by their form tutor. Pupils make excellent use of the opportunities to take responsibility which are plentiful in the house system, through participation in the school council, as guides at events, and, for older pupils in both Senior and Junior Schools, as school or house leaders. They develop a good understanding of elements of citizenship. Junior School pupils experience democracy through participating in elections to the school council. They encounter professionals such as doctors and dentists. Senior School pupils visit a local magistrates' court and explore contemporary events through the current affairs society. Pupils have a strong understanding of society and how they can make a worthwhile contribution through their charitable work which is a strong feature of school life.
- 4.4 Pupils develop strong cultural awareness. The multi-cultural nature of the school community promotes a natural interest in other cultures. Older Senior School pupils gain experience of different lifestyles through sports, cultural, historical and music tours and language trips. Pupils reflect sensitively on their experience of visiting sites such as Herculaneum and express fascination with the landscape of Iceland.

Dramatic and musical performance is enjoyed consistently by pupils of all ages. Junior School pupils develop good cultural awareness for their age through participation in house music and verse-speaking competitions. Senior pupils show high levels of awareness of diverse styles of art, from Rembrandt to the henna artist Ash Kumar, producing highly imaginative individual responses.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.5 The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding in all age groups and, together with the excellent arrangements to ensure their welfare, health and safety, are strengths of the school. These elements contribute to the resounding success with which the school meets its aim to create for pupils a friendly and caring community, and promote the pupils' excellent personal development.

##### ***Junior School and Rose Court***

- 4.6 Staff work together to ensure that the passage of a pupil through the school is achieved in as happy and as safe a way as possible. Relationships between the pupils and the staff are excellent, as are those between pupils and their peers. Junior School staff regularly visit Rose Court so that when Year 2 pupils move to the Junior School they already know them. A similar system prepares Year 6 pupils to move to the Senior School. Rose Court gives Year 2 pupils an awareness of the house system to provide additional preparation. In the Junior School, the house system, year group and form tutors are central to the pastoral care of the pupils. Pupil voice meetings in Rose Court encourage pupils to explore their views about the school as a forerunner to the school council which exists in the Junior School. "Golden time" is used in both sections of the school to encourage good behaviour. On the rare occasions when poor behaviour occurs, a warning card system is instigated. The PSHCE programme effectively supports pastoral care. "Circle time" emphasises personal development and the care of others, backed up by a weekly ethos statement which is published, presented and placed in every classroom.

##### ***Senior School***

- 4.7 The structures within the Senior School ensure that all pupils feel known and valued and every effort is made to monitor both the progress and the wellbeing of each individual. A very effective pastoral structure gives strong support to the personal development of the pupils. Heads of year, deputy heads of year and tutors work together well to provide strong pastoral guidance for the pupils. Tutors meet regularly with heads of year and their work is effectively monitored by both middle and senior management. Tutors provide excellent advice for their pupils and agree objectives with them which are then agreed with parents. Tutors know their pupils well and are able to provide highly effective help, especially at key decision points. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of this system and pupils report that staff are very receptive in dealing with any issues which arise. Relationships between pupils are similarly strong. The PSHCE programme is delivered on a carousel basis by a significant number of staff, with outside expertise drawn on as appropriate. The house system promotes much loyalty in staff and pupils and provides an additional opportunity to strengthen relationships between pupils across age groups. Older pupils enjoy working with the younger ones in a variety of activities.

**Whole School**

- 4.8 In response to questionnaires pupils confirmed that they enjoy life at the school. Some pupils felt that workloads in the Senior School are not monitored effectively and that staff in both Junior and Senior Schools do not listen to the views of pupils. Inspectors found in conversations with pupils that they appreciate the efforts of staff to monitor their workload and feel that they can easily approach staff to discuss any issue and can raise general issues through the school council.
- 4.9 The school has very effective procedures to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying. Most pupils confirm that any bullying would be dealt with effectively. Some concern was expressed in the pupil questionnaires about the fairness with which sanctions are implemented but inspectors found that senior staff monitor this effectively and that disciplinary procedures are appropriate and help promote good behaviour around the school.
- 4.10 The school has excellent arrangements to safeguard pupils and these are implemented well. Regular and effective training is given to all staff, including those with specific responsibilities, and procedures are understood clearly. Measures to prevent the risk of fire and other hazards are strong and outstanding arrangements are in place to ensure the pupils' health and safety on educational visits which take good note of existing guidance. This guidance is reflected well in the assessments of risk.
- 4.11 Good provision exists for pupils who are unwell and this is operated in conjunction with a comprehensive first aid policy. Appropriate planning for access for those with physical needs is made in Rose Court; the Senior and Junior School areas were built with physical access ensured. Arrangements to plan for those with additional learning needs are strong.
- 4.12 Registration of pupils is methodical and absence is followed up quickly. The school maintains and stores an appropriate admission register. Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through developing healthy eating habits and taking regular exercise. The nutritious fare that is provided at lunchtime is of excellent quality and there is a large choice available.



## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 Excellent governance supports the school's aims highly effectively, demonstrating through successful self-review a strong awareness of the school's needs. The governing body supports the ethos of the school particularly strongly in providing opportunities for admission to pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. Having shown imagination and enterprise in establishing the school as it is now constituted, it actively supports senior managers in looking towards the future and promoting the necessary developments needed to consolidate existing success. It provides excellent oversight of those areas where it has legal responsibilities. Governors review safeguarding, staff recruitment, and health and safety arrangements with great care to support the pupils' welfare, and scrutinise arrangements for their academic progress well.
- 5.2 The governing body includes a good range of experience in education, finance and the law. This experience covers education at all ages, including higher education, providing support and challenge for all areas of the school. Strong arrangements are in place for the induction of new governors, including a mentoring scheme, and existing governors undertake regular training.
- 5.3 Governors receive and exchange information about the school effectively, including through regular meetings with senior managers and presentations by staff at governors' meetings. These arrangements are supplemented by informal contact through frequent attendance at school events.
- 5.4 The school's planning is supported by strategic aims based on secure financial oversight which provides for the school's long-term development alongside discrete budgeting for year-on-year provision. The school buildings and open spaces, which provide an exceptional environment for learning, are maintained with care. The older buildings at Rose Court have been developed imaginatively and highly effectively to suit younger pupils.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.5 Strong leadership and good management contribute significantly to the successful achievement of the school's aims. Bold educational direction by senior managers has ensured the success of the initial stages of the school's institution, well informed by knowledge of the needs of individual pupils, ensuring their successful academic progress and excellent personal development. Leadership and management of Rose Court, as a discrete unit connected to the Junior and Senior Schools by effective curricular and pastoral links, is excellent. It has been strengthened by recent changes to share the work load at senior management level.
- 5.6 The school conducts effective and realistic self-evaluation which addresses the necessity of developing existing structures to ensure that the pupils' needs continue to be met. Suitable policies are created to support this development, backed by effective use of communication management systems to disseminate them and to record the pupils' achievement. Policies are clear, and are particularly effective in the area of pastoral care. Policy initiatives to develop teaching and learning in the Senior and Junior Schools have resulted in successful developments in methodology and the provision of rigorous challenge to pupils in much teaching.

However the implementation and monitoring of such policies by middle managers, and oversight by senior managers, are not yet consistent across all subject areas. The school has recently introduced measures to promote wider sharing of existing good practice, such as peer observation, to address this. Pastoral management in all areas of the school operates extremely effectively, ensuring high levels of care.

- 5.7 Close links between the Junior and Senior Schools mirror those with Rose Court, ensuring a growing continuity of a caring ethos and common approaches to teaching and learning. Development planning is well considered, with responses to current objectives reviewed regularly and revised objectives used as the starting point for departmental consideration. It includes clearly-identified criteria for success and clear indications of financial implications. Careful financial oversight ensures that pastoral and academic areas of school life receive appropriate resources.
- 5.8 The school appoints well qualified staff who fully support the school's ethos. A regular system of staff appraisal identifies appropriate areas for professional development. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety, are implemented highly effectively, and include training of all staff in safeguarding procedures. Checking procedures to ensure the suitability of staff and governors to work with children are robust, and the central register is maintained with great diligence. The centralised infrastructure of administrative, financial and other non-teaching staff ensures that all areas of the school, including Rose Court, benefit equally from the expertise available. The caring and friendly community envisaged in the school's aims is realised with the active support of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, who give strong support to pupils.

### **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent, supporting the aims of the school with great effectiveness.
- 5.10 In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, parents showed strong satisfaction with the school's provision, particularly so in the areas of curricular and extra-curricular provision and communication. Some parents felt that the school does not encourage them to be involved in its life and work, but the inspection did not find evidence to support this. Open music lessons have been introduced in Rose Court and the Junior School, where parents can watch their children learning music. Parents are encouraged to support their children throughout the school by attending the extensive range of sporting fixtures, drama presentations, concerts, house performances, art evenings and other events, and many do so. They are encouraged to help with computing, art and DT in Rose Court. Some parents are asked to come into school to talk to the pupils about their profession or about their faith. The Junior School holds working parties for parents to discuss specific aspects of the school.
- 5.11 Some parents expressed dissatisfaction with the help given to pupils with particular learning needs. Inspectors found that help for pupils with LDD and EAL is excellent, but agree that provision for more able pupils and those with particular talents is not yet fully developed in the Senior School. Some parents' responses to the questionnaire indicated dissatisfaction with the way their concerns had been handled by the school. The school has good systems in place to deal with concerns and operates these effectively. The school has a good complaints procedure, although it has not needed to be used recently.

- 5.12 The school has a strong commitment to being as accessible to and communicative with parents as possible, using a range of methods. This includes a comprehensive internal website, to which parents have access, newsletters, letters, meetings, school events and the use of email communication. The school provides all the required information for parents of pupils and prospective pupils. It has sought feedback from parents through its own questionnaires, for example on assessment. Communication with Junior School parents is readily achieved on a daily basis through the Junior School communication book and pupil planners, and informal contact is strong at Rose Court.
- 5.13 Parents receive constructive reports about their children's work, progress and involvement in extra-curricular activities and these complement the separate boys and girls parents' evenings offered. Rose Court provides an opportunity for the parents to make an appointment to discuss the written reports. In the Senior School, there is a helpful opportunity for parents to meet their child's tutor early each academic year.
- 5.14 There is a lively school parents' and friends' association which has sections for the various parts of the school. This organises social events and raises significant funds for the school. For example, it has recently provided Junior School outdoor play equipment and rugby scrum equipment for the Senior School.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 The effectiveness of the EYFS provision is outstanding. The needs of all children are met exceedingly well so they make excellent progress in their learning and development. All staff know the children very well and create a welcoming environment where each child is valued highly. Children are safeguarded very effectively. Rigorous self-evaluation enables existing high standards to be maintained and identifies areas for further improvement. Improvements since the previous inspection include spacious accommodation in new buildings, including a new nursery building, together with extensive development of the outside play areas.

### **6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Comprehensive policies are rigorously implemented to safeguard children and promote equality. Exceptionally strong links exist with parents and the local authority. Parents' responses to questionnaires show strong support for the school. They appreciate the detailed written reports, parents' evenings and the daily contact that keep them fully informed of their children's progress. Links with the local community are more limited in scope and the school has identified that these are not fully developed. A clear vision of the way forward is shared with the extremely effective team of staff members. Regular meetings reflect on current practice, the needs of individual pupils and plans for further improvements. Staff make good use of opportunities for training. Careful observation and detailed assessment ensures equal opportunities for each child, supported by an extensive range of appropriate resources.

### **6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Well qualified and caring staff in a lively setting, and a carefully planned curriculum, enable children to make rapid progress. The wide range of resources provides much scope for imaginative role play, such as the 'Three Bears' Cottage' in the Nursery. A balance is struck between child-initiated and adult-led activities. An accurate profile of each child informs staff about the next steps in learning. Children are cared for extremely well and are taught about keeping safe and healthy in many contexts, for example how to use the outdoor climbing equipment or carry scissors safely. Regular checks of equipment both indoors and outside create a safe environment. Risk assessments are carried out thoroughly.

### **6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. The children make substantial progress so that by the end of Reception most achieve high standards in all six areas of learning, exceeding the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Children are enthusiastic learners and enjoy their activities, and work exceedingly well both individually and co-operatively. By the end of Nursery, most children know and order all numbers up to nine and use a mouse to operate a computer. At the end of Reception, most are

confident in reading, writing and ordering numbers up to twenty. Their creative skills include various painting styles and they produced some delightful cards for Mother's Day. Children care for and respect each other, take turns, share willingly and offer help. They develop a strong sense of safety, seen in the way they move carefully around the school. Children understand that physical exercise, personal hygiene and healthy eating all contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They display exemplary behaviour, are articulate, always give of their best and develop considerable skills for the future.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Martin Bussey	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Valerie Goode	Assistant Reporting Inspector (Former Head of Juniors, IAPS school)
Mrs Jill Berry	Former Head, GSA school
Mr Edwin Brown	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Kathryn Burrows	Head of Juniors, GSA school
Mr Paul Clark	Head of Department, HMC school
Mrs Carole Evans	Former Head, GDST school
Mr Kevin Fear	Head, HMC school
Mr Andrew Lewin	Head, IAPS school
Mr Jonathan Meadmore	Former Head, IAPS school
Ms Sally Peacock	Deputy Head, GDST school
Mr Richard Balding	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector