



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WIMBLEDON HIGH SCHOOL GDST**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Wimbledon High School GDST

Full Name of School	Wimbledon High School GDST		
DfE Number	315/6071		
Registered Charity Number	1026057		
Address	Wimbledon High School GDST Mansel Road London SW19 4AB		
Telephone Number	020 8971 0900		
Fax Number	020 8944 1989		
Email Address	info@wim.gdst.net		
Headmistress	Mrs Heather Hanbury		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Bridget Rosewell		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	907		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	4-5 (EYFS):	44	5-11: 280
	11-18:	583	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	907	
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection dates	5 Oct 2010 to 6 Oct 2010		
	1 Nov 2010 to 3 Nov 2010		

## 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 previous ISI inspection was in November 2004.

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 School 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 Wimbledon High School is a selective day school for girls. It aims to develop intellectual robustness leading to high academic achievement from girls who recognise their ability to shape the society in which they live and work. The current headmistress was appointed in 2008.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1880 and is owned by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), which is a registered charity governing, by Council, a group of 26 independent schools in England and Wales. Each school has a local governing body with a defined set of responsibilities, whose Chair is appointed by the Council. Since the last inspection there have been two changes of Chair of the local governing body, in 2007 and 2009. The school occupies various adjacent buildings in central Wimbledon. A new technology centre and a new performing arts centre have been built and opened since the last inspection. Sports facilities are approximately fifteen minutes' walk from the main site.
- 1.3 The school draws its pupils mostly from south-west London. Currently, the total number of girls is 907, with 324 in the Junior School (Reception to Year 6), of whom 44 are aged four and in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A further 442 girls are in Years 7 to 11 and 141 in the sixth form. Some pupils move to other schools at 11+. Almost all leavers from Year 13 go on to higher education.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the junior school is above the national average, and that of the senior school is far above the national average. Selection is competitive, based on the school's own tests and a nationally standardised verbal reasoning test. The social mix is wide, as is the ethnic and religious mix. Currently, 24 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), but none is at an early stage. No girl has a statement of special educational needs but the school has identified 54 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
- 1.5 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' academic achievements are excellent. They are highly effective learners throughout the school, including in the EYFS. Many pupils also achieve excellent standards in sports and drama, or playing orchestral instruments. Their achievements are securely supported by first-class curricular and extra-curricular provision and the high proportion of excellent teaching. This provision contributes to pupils' exceptional progress over their time in the school. The most able pupils and those with LDD or EAL also achieve well. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning; they are eager self-motivators in a purposeful, achieving community. They work highly effectively together, and their learning is enhanced by the excellent relationships they have with their teachers.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is a significant strength and is backed by extremely effective pastoral care. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Older pupils develop excellent caring relationships with younger pupils in both sections of the school. The sixth-form peer counsellors are popular supporters for anyone needing a good listener, and pupils of all ages undertake responsibility highly successfully. Pupils develop a strong moral code and high levels of self-confidence. They support an extensive range of charities with commitment and compassion. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. Good arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety contribute effectively to their care. Most of the pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were strongly positive about the school.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent and support the school's aims highly effectively. Sharp oversight and excellent planning are combined with effective support from the Trust Council. The school has built further upon the considerable success noted at the last inspection, when no recommendations were made. The Council takes full and effective responsibility for such matters as health and safety, risk and child protection, and the control of finances. The local governing body, together with all staff, identify the school's needs extremely well through highly-effective self-evaluation in a successful, shared leadership. The strategic development plan is the result of thorough consultation and inclusion of the whole school community including staff, parents, and most pupils in the school from the age of eight upwards. Good, often excellent policies, many provided by the Trust, are introduced at all levels and are implemented and monitored effectively at the school. Parents, carers and guardians confirmed continuing excellent relationships with the school and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school and its work in their questionnaire responses.

## **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. Refine the use of assessment by improving the consistency of written feedback to pupils throughout the school, to guide next steps of learning.
  2. In the senior school, improve the accessibility and use of the information available on pupils' progress to ensure that tasks are precisely matched to the differing needs within the class.
  3. Develop the area outside the EYFS classrooms so that it can be used in all weather conditions

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

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

- 3.1 Pupils achieve exceptionally high standards throughout the school, including in the EYFS, in strong fulfilment of the school's aims. Pupils' achievements have further improved on the strong quality noted at the last inspection.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils develop a wide range of excellent knowledge, skills and understanding. Literacy skills are very strong. Pupils are highly articulate. For example, in a junior school philosophy lesson, pupils were quickly able to grasp the theory by their good independent thinking, and pose focused and evocative questions. Examples of pupils using their exceptionally well developed reasoning skills are plentiful. Senior pupils, in a lively debate in their religious studies lesson, put forward well-argued views on the concept of conscience. Pupils' confident use of information and communications technology (ICT) extends their learning. Senior pupils used a number of ICT programs competently to analyse data and input graphics in a design and technology activity. Pupils' numeracy skills are fluent and are used frequently to illuminate findings in a range of subjects. Sixth-form pupils show high levels of intellectual robustness. Their geography work, focused on the construction of a hydroelectric dam, was an example of this. At all ages, pupils develop strong creative skills, particularly in art and drama.
- 3.3 The broad picture of success extends beyond the classroom. Many pupils of all ages reach excellent standards for their age in music in instrumental examinations, and achieve top places in regional performing competitions. Individually and in teams, pupils also gain national success in sports and academic pursuits such as the science Olympiad.
- 3.4 Whatever their backgrounds or talents, pupils achieve well. They make exceptional progress over their time in the school, in relation to pupils of similar ability nationally. Results in national tests at age 7 and age 11 over the past three years have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. Every pupil achieved the highest possible level in the national tests for eleven year olds in English in 2010.
- 3.5 Results in GCSE and A level over the past three years have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and good in relation to the average in selective maintained schools. In GCSE in 2010 nine out of every ten grades were at A\* or A. Every year about a tenth of Year 11 pupils achieve the highest mark nationally in GCSE. At A level, girls have achieved the top mark nationally in a number of subjects. Nine out of every ten grades in 2010 were A\*, A or B.
- 3.6 The pupils of all ages are highly effective learners. When teaching is at its best, an atmosphere prevails in which answers and speculation by pupils involve confident risk taking; pupils are intellectually brave and take risks. Pupils show great enthusiasm for their learning and develop excellent independent research skills. Sixth-form pupils' visit to Barcelona inspired excellent enthusiastic research into Gaudi's church of the *Sagrada Familia*.
- 3.7 Pupils have excellent relationships with staff. They work together well, especially in sports, music and staged productions, and often help each other to achieve clearer



understanding in class. They listen to each other's views and confidently contribute their own. Their concentration and focus are excellent and they show outstanding application in lessons and in activities.

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

- 3.8 The school provides an excellent curriculum that has improved since the last inspection and which meets the needs of all pupils. It offers a wide variety of opportunities for the pupils' creative, physical and linguistic development alongside core skills, and makes a strong contribution to meeting the school's aims.
- 3.9 Close links between different subjects in the junior school are a strength, well suited to the age range and giving pupils frequent opportunities to sharpen skills that serve them over a range of learning. Opportunities to learn languages abound, with three modern foreign languages and Latin being tasted during a junior pupil's time in the school.
- 3.10 The senior curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of opportunities to develop learning and study skills and to develop particular interests such as ancient Greek. The diverse range of subjects offered also includes 'Licence to Cook' for younger seniors, and choices for older pupils include critical thinking, drama, economics, graphics, Latin and psychology, as well as the core range of key subjects, physical education, modern foreign languages, sciences, music and art. International GCSE is offered in history, mathematics and English.
- 3.11 Personal, social, and health education (PSHE) throughout the school is well planned and supports pupils' excellent personal development. It includes good provision for citizenship, financial awareness and decision making, and encompasses much of the school's high-quality careers programme.
- 3.12 Good quality schemes of work are devised and implemented well. At GCSE and A level, pupils are given a good range of subjects to choose from and they appreciate the flexibility of choice which the school offers. Opportunities to develop ICT skills are good, both as a research tool and in presenting text, graphics and data, across a number of subjects.
- 3.13 Pupils with LDD and EAL are identified quickly. Pupils with LDD are given excellent tailor-made educational plans and these are regularly reviewed. Some pupils follow a personalised curriculum and others receive help outside lessons. More able pupils are given excellent well-planned individual opportunities. When lessons are excellent, this occurs as part of the lesson, but other opportunities are also evident. For instance, able junior pupils take joint, regular mathematics lessons with senior school mathematics teachers.
- 3.14 An excellent extra-curricular programme is offered to pupils throughout the school and attendance is good. Participation is monitored and recorded. Excellent provision for sport and drama, and the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, is supplemented by clubs such as textiles, cookery and animation. Older pupils lead activities for younger pupils in both sections of the school. For instance, sixth-form pupils studying advanced mathematics run the mathematics club for younger pupils. Senior pupils help juniors in listening to younger readers.

- 3.15 Many educational visits are undertaken that enrich the classroom-based curriculum. Each year group participates in at least one curriculum-related visit per year. Many pupils, junior and senior, benefit from the residential trips offered. Juniors, in connection with their curricular studies, regularly visit Newcastle, Dorset and France, and seniors travel further afield for sports and to support their other subjects and cultural development, often to far-off places such as Trinidad and Tobago or South Africa. Almost all Year 11 pupils undertake work experience. Pupils of all ages are involved in many community-based projects and charitable events.

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

- 3.16 Teaching throughout the school has improved since the last inspection and is most often excellent. Its quality is reflected in pupils' rapid progress and intellectual competence, meeting the school's aims well. In most lessons, teachers demonstrate thorough knowledge of their pupils and understand their needs and aptitudes well. Teaching provokes intelligent questioning from pupils, accelerating their progress. Classroom assistants are used well to provide additional support for younger pupils. Teaching fosters the pupils' interest and encourages them to think for themselves. The majority of lesson planning is excellent. Tasks are well designed to suit the needs of the majority of the pupils, but in a small minority of lessons insufficient attention is given to providing different tasks better suited to those with additional needs, whether the very able or those who may find learning difficult.
- 3.17 Teachers use a wide variety of methods and use time well. Expectations of pupils in most lessons are high, enabling them to make rapid progress. Discussion between pupils is used to excellent effect across all areas of the curriculum. The teachers' subject knowledge is excellent, and a notable strength of most teaching.
- 3.18 Teaching is supported by an excellent range of resources and good, and in some aspects excellent, purpose-built accommodation. Excellent plans are in place to develop the use of ICT to support the curriculum and there are fine examples of this being embedded as an aid to learning. The libraries are welcoming and inviting areas, well used by pupils, and include a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. A new sixth-form reading room is provided with individual study carrels including laptops.
- 3.19 Assessment is excellent in the junior school and good in the senior school. Standardised tests, formal and informal assessments are used well to identify the pupils' needs, and to monitor and record pupils' progress. Systems to monitor the progress of pupils with particular talents are in place and these are operated well overall. Marking is regular and generally good. Pupils benefit greatly on the occasions when they mark each other's work and use self-assessment against explicit assessment objectives. The setting of agreed individual targets with pupils in individual subjects, and in their overall learning, is a frequent good feature of teaching. The school is engaged in planning the more consistent and broader use of the range of good quality data it collects on pupils' progress so that it can refine lesson planning even further.

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

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

- 4.1 Pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school, and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils develop outstanding self-esteem as they grow in understanding of their developing ability to shape the society in which they live and work, in line with the school's aims. These skills are demonstrated, for example, in preparations for pupil-led assemblies, when senior pupils gave a confident presentation of their student committee to younger pupils. This was brought to life by an excellent film the pupils had made, expertly defining how they intended to carry out their individual roles. This showed perceptive self-awareness in explaining their plans to be a pastoral link between staff and pupil. Take-up of additional sporting and aesthetic performance activities is strong at all ability levels. Through these, pupils develop high levels of confidence.
- 4.2 Pupils develop exceptionally strong moral awareness and have an excellent sense of right and wrong. Pupils regularly discuss moral aspects of such matters as crime and race with insight. Environmental considerations are strong throughout the school. Pupils from Year 1 onwards learn the value of simple actions, such as switching off taps at washbasins. Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are extremely courteous. Charitable work is a strong feature of all pupils' school lives. Their choosing to support local charities this year is a strong example of their awareness that the more needy are not only in distant places, and of their well-developed understanding of the meaning of moral obligation.
- 4.3 Pupils' social development is excellent. Behaviour at all ages is exemplary. Senior and junior school pupils make highly effective use of the opportunities given to them to act as members of committees, such as the two school councils. They contribute fully to determining school policy through the school committees and several *ad hoc* groups set up to work on specific projects. In an excellent example, Years 10 to 13 have been involved in a major '6 is the best' project to identify improvements to all aspects of sixth-form life. This project was followed through with detailed implementation by the girls and has now evolved into their contribution to a whole-school curriculum review, currently underway. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of public institutions.
- 4.4 Pupils show outstanding cultural awareness, especially through the excellent creative literature, drama and art and textile programmes and through subjects such as geography. A senior school group demonstrated excellent cultural understanding when studying the reasons for population change and challenges for less developed societies. Pupils' understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own is well developed. Consequently, the school is a harmonious and tolerant community that fully includes and celebrates a range of ethnicities and religions. Participation in expedition activities in far-off countries promotes pupils' cultural development further. Choirs and drama groups perform a variety of technically difficult work, such as Stephen Sondheim's *'Into the Woods'*, in current production, with great enthusiasm. Pupils produce highly creative and imaginative art work which is displayed around the school. They take part wholeheartedly in visits to European countries to enhance their linguistic and cultural understanding. Some also benefit from cultural enrichment in connection with their wider travels, for instance to Brazil and Ecuador.

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

- 4.5 The school provides excellent pastoral care for pupils, as it did at the time of the last inspection, with a good overall picture of welfare, health and safety. School managers are constantly reflecting on their practice in their quest to provide a fully supportive background for pupils to achieve academic and personal maturity in keeping with the school's aims. In the highly positive picture painted in the pupils' questionnaire responses, a few pupils expressed concern that their workload is not monitored by their teachers and a few felt they were not treated fairly. However, written comments typically reported: 'Whenever I am struggling with something, they take time to properly explain it properly to me and ensure I understand.' Teaching and non-teaching staff provide carefully orchestrated support and guidance. The school's ethos ensures that each pupil is listened to, and known. An imaginative peer counsellor scheme involves older pupils assisting younger. The highly effective arrangements are regularly reviewed and refined in the light of consultation with pupils, parents and staff. Informal communication between the junior and senior school enhances the sense of a unified community. A successful feature of care in both sections of the school is the monitoring of the pupils' academic and pastoral development side by side. Pupils feel that their concerns are addressed appropriately and promptly, and that teachers show genuine care for their well-being.
- 4.6 Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils, are excellent and mutually supportive. This generates a strong sense of loyalty to the school in pupils of all ages. There is a good system of rewards. The school's code of conduct is accessible and understood by pupils. Appropriate sanctions exist to deal with unacceptable conduct and these are felt to be fair and proportionate by pupils. There are various channels through which the pupils' views are heard. The school councils, senior and junior, provide an active forum for discussion and development, and pupils feel that feasible suggestions are acted upon. A particularly strong feature has been the full discussion with all members of the school community, including pupils from Year 4, which led to the development of a new five-year strategic plan. A strong anti-bullying policy is in place and pupils are confident that any such issues are dealt with promptly and firmly.
- 4.7 Safeguarding arrangements are good. Appropriate training is given to all staff, governors are involved and provide a good overview. Access for those with physical or learning needs is well planned. Registration is conducted diligently and absence is quickly followed up. The school maintains an appropriate admissions register. Suitable arrangements exist for pupils who feel unwell and the school operates a comprehensive first aid policy. Measures to prevent risks of fire and other hazards are good, as are arrangements for health and safety on educational visits.
- 4.8 Healthy eating is given a high priority in the PSHE programme and is carefully monitored. Food is of good quality and there is variety and choice. Pupils are given extensive opportunities and encouragement to engage in physical exercise, not the least of which is the regular brisk walk to and from the main sports ground.

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

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

- 5.1 Governance is excellent, as at the time of the last inspection, and supports the school's aims in a highly effective manner. The Trust provides a strong base and overview of all responsibilities. This includes thorough oversight of educational standards and governors' responsibilities for child protection, risk assessment, health and safety, as well as oversight of the financial planning for staff and material resources.
- 5.2 The local governing body's effectiveness is supported by a clear committee structure. Governors offer a good range of expertise and experience, and this enables them to ensure that policies are pertinent to the school whilst complying with regulations. They thoroughly check implementation through regular monitoring. The school buildings are maintained well to support pupils' learning and their personal development.
- 5.3 Local governors know the school and its workings very well. Governors receive high quality information and visit regularly, including being actively involved in training when appropriate. A recent 'away-day' with senior staff enabled the many ideas from pupils and staff to be discussed and a new five-year strategic plan formulated, which was then shared with parents for their input.

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

- 5.4 Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection and are very strong at all levels. This has enabled the aims of the school to be met exceptionally well and improvements to be made in most areas since the last inspection. The school is continually reviewing its practice to refine the way in which its aims are met, and in doing so, fully meets the demands of girls who develop keen awareness of their ability to shape the future of the society in which they live. The implementation of policies of all kinds, including that for safeguarding pupils, is effective because all staff take responsibility.
- 5.5 Management at all levels has been strengthened since the previous inspection by the revision of structures and a precise definition of responsibilities. Very clear educational direction is provided from the top, along with excellent pastoral and academic management which leads to pupils' excellent academic achievement and their finely-developed personal skills. The management style is characterised by shared consultation, including with pupils, and excellent communication among the school community. Heads of department, in enhanced roles since the recent restructuring and the abolition of heads of faculty roles, put these policies into practice successfully, save for minor inconsistencies in implementation and monitoring, such as in the effectiveness of the marking policy.
- 5.6 There are strong links between the junior and senior schools. The senior management team provides a clear vision for the school. It meets regularly, overseeing excellent co-ordination of all areas of the school's activity, including financial matters. The school's self-evaluation is highly effective, being both analytical and reflective. Development planning at whole-school level is strategic and thorough. The key feature is the consultation within the whole school

community that has led to its final form. Careful financial management ensures that these plans can be delivered, and as a result both pastoral and academic areas of school life receive excellent resources.

- 5.7 The school secures well-qualified and dedicated staff who contribute much to the development of a focused community central to the school's ethos. A good system of staff review aids communication between staff. This leads to regular training of staff well designed to address the school's academic needs, and the pupils' welfare, health and safety. Checking procedures to ensure the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors to work with children are robust, and the central register is maintained effectively. The school's sense of community is strengthened by the effective work of secretarial, administrative and other non-teaching staff who share concern for the pupils' well-being and contribute much to the smooth running of the school.

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

- 5.8 The school has an excellent partnership with parents that has improved since the last inspection. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires parents showed satisfaction, often at a high level, with the education and support that their children receive. They show particular satisfaction with leadership and governance, with the attitudes promoted by the school and with the high levels of care offered to pupils and the high standards of behaviour expected. They appreciate greatly the progress made by the pupils, and the extensive range of educational opportunities offered.
- 5.9 A few parents expressed concern in their responses to the questionnaire that written reports are only issued annually but the inspection found that good quality reports, some informing them about assessment grades, are issued more frequently. An excellent range of meetings with parents is available, depending on their daughter's year group. These include curriculum information evenings and pastoral evenings. . At key points of transition, the school offers further consultation, ensuring that each pupil, including those about to join the school, is offered extensive support in excellent ongoing partnership. This is especially the case with the transition from junior to senior school. Consultation begins in Year 5 and pupils and parents are very well prepared for transition.
- 5.10 Parents give much support to the school, with strong attendance at parents' evenings. Parents help with reading with younger pupils; they help at school productions and join in with educational visits. They are invited to attend sports fixtures, concerts and plays. The association for parents of the school involves them fully in the school community.
- 5.11 The school provides an excellent range of information for parents and regularly seeks their views when changes are to be made which affect pupils. For instance, all parents were invited to contribute to the five-year strategic plan for the school. The school's website is of high quality, giving access to all required information for parents of pupils and prospective pupils. The school has in place a suitable complaints policy, and records show that complaints are dealt with promptly. Parents confirm that the school deals well with any concerns that may arise.

**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 is outstanding. The excellent knowledge of all aspects of each girl's development by every member of staff and careful planning ensure that the aim to develop the social and emotional aspects of the girls is well met. The girls achieve extremely well in all areas of learning irrespective of ethnicity or ability. Strong links with parents and outside agencies help to provide a very effective and safe start to the girls' education. Detailed self-evaluation produces innovative plans to sustain high standards. Since the previous ISI inspection, resources have been enhanced following the introduction of a school budget.

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

- 6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Effective implementation of comprehensive policies, procedures and risk assessments ensure that girls are safeguarded at all times, equality is promoted and diversity respected. Appointment checks confirm that adults are suitable to work with children. The dedicated and hard working team regularly assess the girls' individual needs. Useful relationships have been established with the local authority, and staff benefit from their training programme. Staff reviews, self-evaluation and regular meetings contribute to the successful identification of needs such as reorganised storage, and a clear vision for future school development. This includes plans to improve the outdoor classroom. Effective use is made of the excellent resources to support learning. Parents are well informed by a useful handbook. Pre-inspection questionnaires highlighted their appreciation of the good values promoted and of being fully involved in school affairs.

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

- 6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Through excellent knowledge of differing developmental stages and careful observations, staff plan challenging work for each child across all learning areas. They meet regularly, quickly identifying when individual support is required. Planning provides an excellent balance between whole-class teaching and activities selected by the girls. It is sufficiently flexible to accommodate unexpected and original ideas. The good quality accommodation, enhanced by specialist areas such as the ICT suite and swimming pool, provides a stimulating and safe learning environment. In fine weather the adjacent outdoor areas allow excellent learning opportunities. All areas are checked regularly for safety. Key people and outstanding relationships result in the children being exceedingly well cared for. Staff set high expectations and provide excellent role models for healthy and considerate behaviour.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for the EYFS are outstanding. The Early Learning Goals for this age group are fully met and often exceeded. In all curriculum areas the girls are proud of their considerable achievements. Progress is excellent. They are confident and active learners who enjoy completing tasks independently. The girls participate in activities with much enthusiasm. They understand class rules and behave responsibly. They are co-operative and helpful, supporting one another as they solve problems and share ideas. The children are articulate and listen politely to each other. They use ICT confidently. As inquisitive learners they discovered their favourite fruit taste. The girls are aware of the need to climb stairs safely, know the importance of hand washing and enjoy trying healthy foods at lunch. They appreciate the value of exercise and hygiene and they are confident swimmers.

**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 the local governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Mary Breen	Headmistress, GSA school
Mrs Anne Griffiths	Deputy Head, GSA school
Dr Pam Hillier	Head of School, GSA school
Mr Rick James	Vice-Principal, HMC school
Mr Huw May	Head of Juniors, GSA school
Mrs Kathryn Stokes	Head of Juniors, ISA school
Mrs Ann Stranack	Co-ordinating Inspector, Early Years