



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ROSSALL SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Rossall School

Full Name of School	<b>Rossall School</b>		
DCSF Number	<b>888/6044</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY346639</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>526685</b>		
Address	<b>Rossall School Broadway Fleetwood Lancashire FY7 8JW</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01253 774201</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01253 774282</b>		
Email Address	<b>lesleyj@rossallcorporation.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Dr Stephen Winkley</b>		
Chair of Council	<b>Mr Steve James</b>		
Age Range	<b>1 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>577</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (343 boys; 234 girls;)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>11</b>	5-11: <b>95</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>41</b>	11-19: <b>430</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>335</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	<b>0</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>242</b>	
	Full:	<b>239</b>	Weekly: <b>3</b>
Head of Nursery	<b>Mrs Alison Trippier</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection date/EYFS	<b>23 Mar 2010 to 24 Mar 2010</b>		
Final (team) visit	<b>4 May 2010 to 6 May 2010</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 previous ISI inspection was in February 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 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard 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 boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted/Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report refers to an inspection in November 2009 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommended action	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
(c) The quality of boarding education	10
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management	11
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	13
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>14</b>
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	15
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>16</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Rossall School was founded in 1844 as an Anglican boys' boarding school to provide a modern education financially accessible to the sons of clergymen, among others. A small number of girls joined the school in the early 1970s and Rossall became fully co-educational in 1977. In 1991, the Nursery was added. In 1995 the International Study Centre (ISC) was opened, offering tuition for English as an additional language (EAL) and an introduction to a British education. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma was introduced into the sixth form alongside A levels in 1998 and from January 2007 the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) has been introduced in the Junior and Infants School, and in the Nursery. The school, incorporated by Royal Charter, is a registered charity. The trustees of the charity are among the twenty-four governors of the school who together make up the School Council.
- 1.2 The school seeks to be a community where all pupils are valued and are encouraged to explore all their talents. The purpose of the school is to provide an academic and social education for young people in preparation for adult life. To achieve this, the school is developed as a place of education, where good relationships are created between pupils, teachers and parents, and where pupils will seek to be part of, and contribute to, the wider community. The school recognises the importance of six aspects of pupils' educational life and development: the academic, the pastoral, which at Rossall is achieved through the house system, the physical, the cultural, the social and the spiritual.
- 1.3 Situated at the top of the Fylde peninsula, the school attracts day and boarding pupils from North West Lancashire. In addition, a large number of boarders come from overseas, mostly from China, the Far East and Europe, in all representing more than 30 nationalities. Most of these pupils join the ISC in Year 10 or 11 for a one or two year course. Some will then transfer to the main school, particularly into Year 12, so that with others joining the school in Year 12 the school has a fully international sixth form. The current roll at the start of the inspection numbered 577, 343 boys and 234 girls. The ability range of pupils is wide. Overall, based on nationally standardised tests taken at different stages in the school, in the Infant, Junior, Middle and Senior School up to Year 11, pupils' ability is above the average nationally in primary and secondary maintained schools. In the sixth form, the average ability is similar to the national average.
- 1.4 Currently more than 220 pupils, mostly those from overseas, have EAL and of these 165 receive specialist extra tuition. In addition, the school has identified 43 pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), of whom 24 receive specialist extra support, organised by the learning support staff in each section of the school. The school also seeks to identify gifted and talented pupils and to provide support appropriate to their particular needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

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

- 2.1 Pupils' attainment across all sections of the school is good in relation to their ability, age and background. Pupils' achievements are seen in their academic performance but also more widely in sport, art, music, drama and in a range of extra-curricular activities. The school's aims, to provide an all-round education encouraging pupils to develop all their talents, are well met. The quality of pupils' learning is also good; they are interested in their work and motivated to learn, and they develop sound study skills. This quality is particularly strong for Junior School pupils in the PYP. The good attainment and progress made by all pupils are supported by a broad and well-chosen curriculum, and by predominantly good and sometimes excellent teaching.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development throughout the school is excellent, founded on effective and active pastoral care. In the ISC and the Senior School the boarding houses underpin the care and welfare of the pupils and provide every opportunity for the development of personal responsibility, leadership and social skills. This approach is mirrored by form teachers in the Middle and Junior Schools, and, throughout the school, relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are excellent.
- 2.3 The school is well governed and strongly led. A dynamic senior team is effecting change and monitoring standards across the school. Each section of the school has its own leadership and attendant management structure which generally works well, so that staff and pupils are given good support, and their welfare is assured. However, the new arrangements have not yet had time to be embedded fully in all subject departments and houses in the Senior School so that standards, for example in the marking of written work or in tutor support for some pupils, are not uniformly high. The Middle School, too, suffers from a lack of clarity in its role and is not yet gaining the full benefit available from the systems provided. The school runs efficiently on a daily basis. The administrative and non-teaching staff provide effective support of high quality for all facets of the school's life. In the questionnaire completed by parents before the inspection, a strong degree of backing for the school and the education it provides was expressed.

## **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 did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended, and therefore it was required to:

- ensure that references, CVs and medical fitness declarations are obtained for all staff before appointment [Regulation 4.(c), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].

2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school's practice was fully compliant.

2.6 The school's registered provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006, and no action was required.

### **(ii) Recommended action**

2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Provide information and training on support for pupils with LDD to enable classroom teachers to address more directly the learning needs of these pupils.
2. Extend the full PSHE scheme of work into the curriculum for Years 10 and 11, and into the sixth form.
3. Share the best practice in teaching and marking within and across subject departments in the Senior School.
4. Review the role, organisation and management of the Middle School.
5. Promote closer liaison across the Nursery and Reception classes to ensure that provision and development planning in the EYFS is more carefully co-ordinated.
6. Further develop documentation to ensure that Reception as well as Nursery information gives adequate detail about the provision.
7. Include use of the outdoor environment in the Reception class planning, ensuring full use of the well-resourced outdoor areas.

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

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

- 3.1 Overall levels of achievement are good in relation to pupils' abilities in all sections of the school. Within lessons and in their written work, the high standards of achievement and the quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and skills meet the school's stated aims of pursuing excellence, developing self-motivation and a desire for knowledge. Progress overall is good across all of the main stages. Attainment in public examinations at the ages of eleven, sixteen and eighteen shows that pupils of all abilities make good progress; in particular, at GCSE pupils of modest ability do well, as do the ISC pupils in their IGCSE examinations.
- 3.2 Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed; for example, a Year 3 group discussed some rock samples gathered from the beach with precision and great animation. In interviews with inspectors, pupils were articulate, confident and very positive about their school life. Pupils' writing skills are also good, covering a wide range of purposes. Numeracy skills are developed effectively throughout the school. Pupils use these skills in science and geography to handle and display data, as well as using equations to model interactions in chemistry and economics. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their opportunities to develop practical skills in science and design and technology (DT).
- 3.3 Pupils have an appropriate range of ICT skills, which are occasionally used to support work in other subjects. A Year 10 group was seen making very effective use of ICT software in music. Pupils use ICT for research purposes and as a helpful tool for examination revision. Language skills are developed very effectively within the ISC and pupils joining the school from overseas make rapid progress in English with the support of the EAL department. Extra support for pupils with LDD, and formal encouragement of the gifted and talented, ensures that these pupils also make good progress. Creativity is much in evidence in some subject areas, notably in art where an excellent display shows the range and quality of work being undertaken. The Junior School also has very good displays of pupils' work.
- 3.4 At the age of eleven, in the three years to 2009, the achievement of pupils in national tests was high relative to the national average for maintained primary schools. Pupils obtained similarly good results at GCSE with over two-fifths of grades being at A or A\* level. These figures are high in relation to national norms, based on figures for the last three years. In the ISC, students are prepared thoroughly for IGCSEs and attainment is also good, serving as sound preparation for further study, either at Rossall or elsewhere. At A level, over the last three years, results for both boys and girls have been in line with the average for all maintained schools with three-fifths of grades being at A or B level. The IB results are above the worldwide average and slightly below the UK average.
- 3.5 The strength of pupils' academic achievement is matched by their success beyond the classroom. Individual achievements include distinctions in Maths Olympiads and the European Kangaroo mathematical challenge. Eighty candidates were entered for the Associated Board music examinations in 2009 and one pupil currently is in the Halle Youth Orchestra. Levels of achievement in sport, a strength of the school, are high both at school team level and for individuals at county level and above.



3.6 The overall quality of pupils' learning is good and they have a positive attitude to school work. Pupils are enthusiastic and show self-discipline and determination. The quality of learning in the Junior School, within the PYP programme, is particularly high, where pupils work very well together and develop excellent listening and communication skills. Pupils are encouraged to work independently at all ages and increasingly recognise the need to take more responsibility for their learning.

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

3.7 The curriculum offered by the school covers well all areas of learning, is suited to pupils' ages and abilities, and, consequently, pupils reach good standards in a range of subjects and activities. The curriculum supports the aims of the school in providing an all-round education and equipping pupils for life beyond school. Since the last inspection, considerable expansion of, and changes to, the curriculum have occurred throughout the school.

3.8 The Junior School curriculum is undergoing a revolution by taking on the IB Primary Years Programme. Teaching staff have managed well the change to this guided enquiry approach to learning and ensure that pupils still acquire all the knowledge and skills they need by the age of eleven. The programme is particularly strong on communication skills. The programme is set out clearly for parents in the Junior and Infant curriculum policy.

3.9 The Middle and Senior School curriculum begins in Years 7 to 9 with a broad selection of subjects which prepare the pupils for GCSE choices; pupils usually take nine subjects at GCSE. Most subjects are set by ability in Years 7 to 11, either by subject, or by groups of subjects. In the sixth form, approximately half the pupils study for the IB and half study for AS and A levels. Sixth form groups are large in number and often small in size because of the range of subjects and the mixture of both IB and A levels.

3.10 The International Study Centre (ISC) provides the opportunity for foreign students to gain a selection of IGCSE qualifications before embarking on higher level qualifications in a sixth form or at college. Class sizes are small and individual teaching is available as needed.

3.11 PSHE is formally taught in the Junior School and from Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 the pupils have some designated PSHE days. However, the full scheme of work, which includes topics on citizenship and careers, is not yet incorporated fully into the curriculum in Years 10 and above, although some topics, for example ethics, are addressed through other areas of the curriculum such as religious studies (RS), English and psychology.

3.12 The excellent careers programme prepares the pupils from Year 7 onwards and gives guidance for option choices for GCSE and A level or IB, university applications and future employment. In particular, the help with UCAS applications is expertly managed and greatly appreciated by older pupils.

3.13 The school has strengthened its provision for learning support since the last inspection, with more formal lines of communication. In the Junior School, it is well organised with regular assessment. Pupils identified with LDD have learning target records and their progress is monitored. In the Senior School the head of

independent learning, who is also the SENCO, shares information about LDD pupils with heads of department. Pupils' individual education plans are available for all teachers on the intranet and are updated regularly. However, pre-planned teaching of LDD pupils in the classroom is not yet much in evidence. Gifted and talented pupils are recognised and supported, mainly by individual encouragement from subject departments. Provision for pupils with EAL is effectively organised in the ISC and across the school, giving good extra support as needed.

- 3.14 A comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities and community links complements the curriculum. These enable pupils to develop leadership skills, through Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), as well as broadening their horizons and enriching their life at school. Examples of the range of activities include bug hunting, science club and Jo Jingles (music and movement for the infants' classes) in the Junior School, and in chamber choir, croquet and art club in the Senior School. Many sports activities are available within the programme. All staff contribute and their commitment is instrumental in maintaining the pupils' enthusiasm. The school has a programme of school trips to support academic work or for recreation, and a tradition of overseas trips for sports teams, and for the chamber choir. Community links are fostered through charity work and the creativity/action/service (CAS) element within the IB programme.

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

- 3.15 Teaching is effective in promoting pupils' academic and other successes, as well as enhancing the quality of their education and supporting the school's aims. In the Senior and Junior Schools and in the ISC, teaching is good overall and sometimes exceptional. In the majority of lessons, the positive relationships between teachers and pupils contribute to a positive atmosphere, and the productive use of time and good subject knowledge encourage pupils' progress. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the extra time provided by teachers and the support they habitually receive.
- 3.16 The best lessons are based on an excellent awareness of the abilities and needs of the pupils, and are characterised by a lively pace, praise and encouragement, good humour and energy. In these lessons, independent learning is fostered by carefully chosen activities that encourage maximum pupil participation and allow them to explore their own ideas and understanding. Tasks were carefully chosen to meet the needs of different groups in a Year 8 history class exploring the Civil War. Challenging open questions, followed up by detailed probing of answers, helped pupils develop complex responses, in a Year 12 English poetry class. The best teaching has high expectations of pupils, and very good classroom management ensures that pupils are attentive and responsive. Teaching in the PYP in the Junior School unit of inquiry encourages joint planning and strong pupil involvement. Pupils feel challenged and stimulated by their teachers' approaches in RS, philosophy and psychology.
- 3.17 In less stimulating lessons, more routine teaching shows inadequate awareness of the different learning requirements of pupils of different abilities in the particular class. Photocopied resources are over-used and independent work by pupils is not effectively fostered.
- 3.18 Teachers have access to a good range of resources to support learning and a variety of stimuli, including some ICT, is used effectively to promote the development of subject skills. The Year 7 class exploring *Macbeth* through the use of puppets benefited greatly from this creative approach. Art, which is open to all pupils, and

sport are very well provided for. The new librarian is enthusiastically upgrading the library resources and seeking to develop close links with departments, with the aims of increasing pupils' use of the library and the promotion of reading and independent learning.

- 3.19 Work is set and marked regularly, and the marking overall is satisfactory. General praise and encouragement dominate, but only in a few departments such as English and RS are formative comments regularly used. The school now holds reliable data on the pupils and the director of studies is training heads of department in the use of this data for assessment. The use of standardised data to inform curricular planning and teaching, as well as to establish a benchmark for pupils' progress, has begun. Pupils are guided well by the target-setting system in reports, and tutors in the Senior School reinforce the targets effectively with their tutees. Form teachers in the Middle School seem less well informed about data and targets relevant to their 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 pupils' personal development is excellent. Throughout the school, the pupils display extremely well-developed personal qualities and are confident in their relationships with adults and with each other. Excellent mutual respect exists between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves, irrespective of nationality. An open and perceptive discussion about eating disorders, seen in one of the girls' boarding houses, shows the trust and support embedded within the school community. The school is successful in its aim to promote strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. The pupils, who appreciate the wide range of opportunities for personal development the school is able to offer, happily shoulder responsibility and care for others.
- 4.2 Pupils are well aware of the spiritual dimension of their education. They have a capacity for reflection and are sympathetic to each individual's place in the school community. They have a sense of their own worth and are respectful in their dealings with each other. The recent appointment of a chaplain is indicative of the school's desire to strengthen the pupils' spiritual life and a pattern of voluntary worship, including a weekly Communion service, supports religious faith and worship. Furthermore, weekly attendance at chapel for all members of the community is a traditional feature of school life, offering opportunities for reflection and worship.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Their outstanding behaviour both inside and outside the classroom is a reflection of their capacity to distinguish right from wrong; they are guided and supported in this by a dedicated, committed and caring staff. In lessons, in activities and around the school they listen, share and genuinely want to do what is right. Pupils develop and maintain their own personal moral standards beyond the confines of the school.
- 4.4 Pupils have a high level of social development and relish responsibility whether in school as a monitor, in the boarding house or as captain on the playing field. The school provides pupils with good opportunities to develop leadership skills and prepares them well for future challenges, whether in school or beyond. Pupils' understanding of public institutions, as well as their developing ethical and moral understanding, is supported by PSHE and other subjects, and by their own curiosity.
- 4.5 Throughout the school, opportunities, such as International Week, are provided to enable pupils to develop a strong understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage and that of others. This was evident in lessons, in assemblies and in conversations with pupils about their work and extra-curricular activities. Most striking was the respect and understanding they gain about different cultures from living in a cosmopolitan community. They do not simply tolerate each other, but see each other as equals in a single community of pupils and staff, whilst respecting and empathising with their cultural differences. Work in religious studies, history and geography only serves to cement the process, as does the programme of overseas visits, which gives pupils first-hand experience of other cultures.

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

- 4.6 The school meets its commitment to offer an excellent standard of pastoral care to its pupils. The pastoral structure operates highly effectively for the benefit of pupils throughout the school. The deputy head leads a dedicated team of houseparents and their tutors in the Senior School and in the two ISC houses, while the Middle School is treated as a day house. Suitable arrangements exist for sharing and maintaining pupil records, and the deputy head undertakes an annual audit of each house. The Junior School has equally effective arrangements for care of the pupils, led by the head of Junior School and supported by the form teachers including, for example, a system of house points and recognition in assembly. All pupils know that their well-being is a priority for the school and the staff.
- 4.7 Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are excellent. The degree of integration and the friendships developed in the houses between pupils from very different backgrounds are a particular feature. Pupils value the interest the teachers show in them, and the encouragement and guidance they receive from both teaching and support staff. This was clear from conversations with pupils of all ages, as well as from the relatively limited number of responses received to the pupils' questionnaire. These views were reinforced by parental judgements.
- 4.8 The school is strongly committed to its pupils' welfare. Pupils, staff and parents understand the clear anti-bullying policy. Pupils report that bullying incidents are rare, but, when they occur, staff deal with them promptly and effectively, if the pupils have not already resolved the issue. Whilst the school rules are well known, the school's approach to behaviour is to guide pupils to a high level of self-management. The school achieves its aim for high standards of behaviour and respect for the opinions, beliefs and needs of others.
- 4.9 The school's approach to safeguarding its pupils is robust, with a comprehensive safeguarding policy, well known by both staff and senior pupils. The designated teacher's inter-agency training is up to date, as is the training of all staff working in the school. The safe recruitment of staff and governors is now fully covered and well documented. The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.
- 4.10 Fire safety is a priority, with regular, documented practices, and health and safety measures are thorough, overseen by the estates manager and the health and safety and projects manager. The bursar chairs the health and safety committee, which includes a governor. The access plan for those with learning or physical needs is up-to-date, and has detailed plans for future developments to improve access to the school buildings and to the education provided.
- 4.11 Most pupils report that they enjoy the food provided by the school; however, a vocal minority disagree. During the inspection lunch with the pupils in the imposing dining hall was found to be very satisfactory, in a relaxed and friendly social atmosphere. The medical centre is well managed and resourced, the staff providing a good quality of medical and pastoral support, particularly to houses. Pupils have a range of opportunities for physical exercise, which is encouraged by the school. Junior School pupils had an opportunity to discuss the nature of a balanced diet and healthy eating habits.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.12 Boarding, historically and currently, is an intrinsic and valuable part of the school's character and ethos. The good quality of the educational experience of all pupils, day and boarding, and juniors as well as seniors, is achieved in part by this boarding tradition. Boarding contributes much to the achievement of the school's aims to establish good relationships throughout the community and to prepare pupils for adult life. The boarding nature of the school determines the organisation of the school day and the emphasis on extra-curricular activities. More significantly, it forms the basis for the approach to pupils' pastoral care and welfare, centred on house communities supported by houseparents and tutors or, in the Junior School, an equivalent community approach supported by the head of the Junior School and the form tutors. Many of the houses now cater for a mixture of day and boarding pupils, with some weekly boarding, thus enabling the day pupils to benefit from the house structure and increasing the overall cultural mix in each house. For the boarders themselves, many from overseas, the house provides the key family unit in which friendships are formed, and personal and academic development are nurtured. In most cases, pupils from overseas are placed in one of two houses attached to the ISC. Those staying beyond the first year, particularly if they are moving into the sixth form, will usually then transfer to one of the main school boarding houses, which enjoy a fully international membership and are such a distinctive feature of the school's experience.
- 4.13 The recent Ofsted inspection of boarding in 2009 recognised that strong and positive relationships are established within the boarding houses, between pupils themselves, and between pupils and staff. While houses vary in character, the strength of commitment of houseparents and tutors to their welfare is acknowledged by the pupils. Pupils feel secure, are confident and are encouraged to achieve. Many have opportunities for leadership within the house, in which they engage responsibly and enthusiastically.
- 4.14 As well as the extra-curricular activities organised on a school basis and available to all pupils, many more are organised on a house basis, for example, recreational activities at weekends or social events such as a house barbecue. Trips outside the school are arranged at weekends. Competitions between houses include music and a variety of sports. Most school facilities are available to boarders in the evenings or at weekends; nationally themed evenings organised in Mondo, the school restaurant, are a popular example.
- 4.15 The organisation within the houses is efficient. In particular, medical matters are managed with care and thoroughness, with the support of the school nurses and the excellent arrangements established between the houses and the sick-bay. A small number of regulatory matters, noted by the Ofsted inspection, have been addressed and the school is continuing its programme of refurbishment of all the boarding houses, as recommended in the last ISI report. Those completed now provide comfortable and cheerful accommodation, appropriate to the ages of the boarders. Good facilities are provided in all houses: televisions; ICT; games room; and cooking facilities. Those houses awaiting refurbishment remain rather spartan in appearance.

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

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

- 5.1 The School Council provides effective oversight of the school. In their regular meetings and through three committees: Executive; Health and Safety; and Facilities (Estates), the governors discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, investment in resources and financial planning. The financial well-being of the school is the priority of the Executive Committee, which meets twice a term and to which the bursar reports. The post of bursar, with whole-school responsibilities, is a recent and important addition to the school's senior management team, which has given clarity to the governors' role to provide effective oversight and strategic direction to the school while delegating direct management and leadership to the headmaster and senior team. While the recent governance focus has been on the school's financial well-being, increasing emphasis is now being put on educational aspects of the school.
- 5.2 The governors increasingly are developing a good insight into the working of the school, ensuring that academic, pastoral and personal standards are maintained. The headmaster reports in detail to each Council meeting and is in regular contact with the chairman. The governors represent a wide range of experience in education and business, the majority with personal knowledge of the school as former pupils. Those living nearby are frequent visitors to the school and a recent initiative has been a joint dinner for governors and staff, which has proved extremely successful. One governor takes a particular interest in the Junior School and Nursery. Through these and other means, governors are able to endorse and support the headmaster's vision for the future, providing challenge and encouraging improvement.
- 5.3 The governors receive a report on safeguarding at each Council meeting and review policies and procedures annually. However, only recently has best practice in the appointment of staff been fully implemented and recorded, so that governing body responsibility in this regard has not been effectively discharged in the recent past. In other respects, recommendations from the last boarding report on regulatory matters, for example in regard to boarding and health and safety, have been carefully addressed.

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

- 5.4 Leadership of the school is strong and well directed; a clear vision is promoted of what the school should aspire to be. Since the appointment of the present headmaster in 2008, a largely new senior team has been formed which, in its constituent areas of leadership and responsibility, and collectively as senior management, effectively implement this vision through the school, to the benefit of all staff and pupils. Management at all levels in the school is for the most part successful in implementing school policies and ensuring that the school's aims are achieved.
- 5.5 The overall leadership group is responsible for whole school issues. Each section then has its own management team. In the Senior School this includes the head of the International Study Centre, but not the head of Middle School. Leadership in the Junior School stems from the head of the Junior School and is then delegated in the Infants department to the co-ordinator of Years 1 and 2 and to the Nursery manager.

The management structures in the Senior and Junior parts of the school achieve clear educational direction and provision, reflected in the good quality of pupils' education and the high standard of their personal development. The Middle School, however, at present fits awkwardly with these arrangements, and finds itself at some distance from senior management.

- 5.6 At the next level in the Senior School, the eight houseparents form the foundation of the pastoral support in the school, and the heads of departments are responsible for standards of teaching and learning in their subjects. These middle managers report respectively to the deputy head and the director of studies who have instituted a potentially effective and supportive audit process for the houses and for the departments. The value of this monitoring process is already clear, not least in the process of appraisal and support it offers to classroom teachers and tutors, although it is not fully implemented in all departments and every house. In the Junior School, the senior teacher has oversight of pastoral matters and the subject co-ordinators support teaching and learning in their subjects. In the ISC, the tutors work under the head of ISC. These arrangements work well in these smaller units. In addition, other staff deal effectively with, for example, child protection matters or professional development or careers.
- 5.7 The links between different sections of the school sometimes appear somewhat tenuous but pupil transition is managed effectively. For example, the information on pupils with LDD is held separately by Senior and Junior Schools, although pupils with EAL are monitored effectively on a whole school basis. By contrast, the ISC and the main school together are actively seeking ways to increase integration for pupils and staff.
- 5.8 Policy development and planning are overseen by the leadership group and then by the School Council, with input from all areas of the school. The resulting plan, regular review and annual priorities are set out in detail and form the basis for consistent leadership and direction. The Junior School has its own subsidiary development plan. Staff and pupils are clear about what the school seeks to be, so that an ethos is established of collective purpose and personal achievement.
- 5.9 The school now has thorough systems for the recruitment and induction of staff. Professional development in the Senior School is largely managed through the departmental audits by senior management, supported by the senior mistress in charge of staff training. The Junior School organise their own staff appraisal and training, although regular training is provided at school level for all staff on welfare, health and safety, and safeguarding issues. Communication within the school between staff and senior management is good. Teachers are fully aware of the school's aims and have confidence in the future.
- 5.10 The school has a large ancillary and administrative staff, under the leadership of the bursar, who provide loyal and committed service to the school; they do much to support the work of teachers and to promote pupils' welfare. Together with the deputy head and other senior management, they help to ensure that the school runs smoothly and efficiently on a daily basis.



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

- 5.11 A constructive relationship is maintained between the school and its parents, achieving the school's aims of providing regular contact with parents and opportunities for feedback.
- 5.12 The school provides parents with regular, helpful information about their children's progress and about what is going on at school. Newsletters, a weekly bulletin, calendars, informative individual reports and grades, and an up-to-date website provide the parents with the necessary material and a good insight into school life. Each section of the school has effective and appropriate arrangements for communication with parents. Parents of prospective pupils have access to the website and are provided with a prospectus, and other relevant information about the school, registration procedures and entry requirements.
- 5.13 All parents are encouraged to meet the staff at parents' evenings, held throughout the year, to discuss their children's progress and ways to improve. For overseas pupils, houseparents will be in regular contact with parents or their agents to keep them informed of their children's progress and to deal with matters such as travel arrangements. In the Junior School, parents regularly attend sporting fixtures and assemblies, and talk to the pupils about their jobs and interests. Throughout the school, parents have opportunities to attend matches, concerts and plays and other events, including an evening to consider A-level choices or to discuss university entrance.
- 5.14 The response to the parents' questionnaire was positive, demonstrating overall appreciation of the education provided for pupils. The ethos of the school was praised, as was the range of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and support provided by the staff.

**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 overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. The aims of the setting are largely achieved and the welfare of the children is of the utmost importance. Comprehensive development planning and clear policies ensure children's safety and progress in learning. The unique qualities of each child are recognised and children show good levels of independence in their learning. Careful observations are recorded for children in the EYFS and detailed learning journeys are kept for all nursery children. There are good relationships with parents and carers, who are very supportive of the setting, and appreciate the care provided by the staff and the standards of quality and learning. Since the previous inspection, the setting has made good progress. It has reviewed the key person system and has created new 'parent liaison' books. Self-evaluation and participation in the 'step into quality' programme in the nursery ensure that plans for continuous improvement are effective.

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

6.2 Leadership and management of the EYFS are good, with some outstanding features. All adults are well qualified, well deployed and are suitable to work with children. Children's well-being and safeguarding are enhanced by comprehensive risk assessments which are monitored carefully. Both the head of infant and nursery and the nursery manager have a good understanding of the importance of the EYFS. All records, policies and procedures necessary for the efficient management of the setting are in place and implemented carefully. The 'step into quality' self-evaluation programme provides the teachers with clear information about progress and areas for improvement. Resources are well labelled and stored for ease of access, and are used effectively to enhance children's experiences. Appropriate training is undertaken by the staff. Reflection on such training enables staff to meet the needs of children, providing high quality care and education. Effective partnerships have been established with parents and carers, other schools and local authority EYFS consultants, who support professional development.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is good. Children learn and develop well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences, such as through role play in a garden centre. Play is planned and purposeful and there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Effective observations and assessments enable staff to identify, plan for and record children's next steps well. The well-resourced outdoor environment for the EYFS gives children first-hand experience of the natural world. The secret garden gives opportunities for imaginative play. However, there is limited use by reception children of the outdoor classroom. Children are guided and supported well by their key person who provides safe and clear routines for them. Children enjoy the healthy snacks provided for them. They take pride in being awarded with stickers to show they have eaten vegetables at lunch time.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children in the EYFS are good. Children make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Literacy and numeracy are strongly promoted and most children make good progress in these areas. Their knowledge and understanding of the world are developed through first-hand experiences. They manipulate computer programmes confidently and can talk about their learning activities with growing confidence. Children enjoy their learning and while they investigate and respond to challenges, they persevere until successful. Personal, social, and emotional development is apparent, and the children respect and co-operate with one another. Behaviour is managed through gentle reminders of the school's rules. Children develop a good awareness of personal safety and hygiene and they comply with the simple rules that relate to these. They are taught about keeping safe and understand the need for routines such as hand washing.

#### **Complaints since the Last Inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

**What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## 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 chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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 Michael Higginbottom	Reporting Inspector
Miss Margaret Connell	Team Inspector (Former Principal, GSA school)
Mrs Christine Lane	Team Inspector (Former Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mr George Fisher	Team Inspector (Former Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Robert Haworth	Team Inspector (Principal, ISA school)
Mrs Nicola Matthews	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Tim Owen	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Dr Charles Runacres	Team Inspector (Director of Teaching and Learning, HMC school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Joan Fearn	Early Years Team Inspector (Head of School (Pre-prep), IAPS school)