



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ADCOTE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Adcote School for Girls

Full Name of School	<b>Adcote School for Girls</b>		
DfE Number	<b>893/6003</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>528407</b>		
Address	<b>Adcote School for Girls Little Ness Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 2JY</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01939 260 202</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01939 261 300</b>		
Email Address	<b>secretary@adcoteschool.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Gary Wright</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Timothy Morris</b>		
Age Range	<b>4 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>159</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>5</b>	5-11: <b>33</b>
	11-19:	<b>121</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>84</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>75</b>	
	Full:	<b>63</b>	Weekly: <b>12</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Anne Ravenscroft-Jones</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Girls</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>21 Sep 2010 to 22 Sep 2010</b>		
	<b>18 Oct 2010 to 20 Oct 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 November 2006.

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 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 report refers to an inspection in March 2010 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</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) Recommendations for further improvement	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	5
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
(c) The quality of boarding education	9
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management	10
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	11
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>12</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	12
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>14</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Adcote School for Girls is a non-selective school which strives to foster a caring, safe and secure environment and a family atmosphere leading to personal pupil happiness and good relationships. It wishes its pupils to achieve successfully as a result of good teaching, so that they meet or exceed individual academic expectations with their individual talents nurtured. The school strives to provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities and events in order to offer further opportunities for pupil excellence, enthusiasm and experience. It sets itself the task of building self-respect and self-confidence in order to equip its pupils with the skills to tackle contemporary life.
- 1.2 The school is a registered charity, administered by a board of governors. The school is situated about five miles northwest of Shrewsbury in 27 acres of parkland. It was founded in 1907 and is set in a Grade One listed country house built in 1879 for the Darby family. The current headmaster has been in post since September 2009. The school has grown significantly in size since its last inspection in 2006.
- 1.3 Day and boarding education is provided for girls aged from four to nineteen. At the time of the inspection, there were 159 pupils on roll, of whom 38 were in the Junior School (Reception to Year 6) and 121 in the Senior School (Years 7 to 13). The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has five children. The school has 63 full boarders and twelve weekly boarders. Pupils are drawn mainly from professional and business families, or from farming backgrounds; most come from Shrewsbury, or the surrounding villages and market towns, and from across the border in Wales. Pupils leave mainly to further education at sixteen or higher education at eighteen. Boarders come mainly from forces families or from Hong Kong, mainland China, the United States, Spain, Japan, Ukraine, Germany and Nigeria.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the Junior School is in line with the national average. Year group sizes are small and the ability of pupils varies from below to far above the national average. The overall ability profile of the Senior School is above the national average, with most pupils either above or in line with this average.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection, sixteen pupils were identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), including three with statements of special educational needs (SEN). The school had 45 pupils whose first language is not English, of whom 41 were receiving support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. In the senior school the school uses NC nomenclature. The year group nomenclature used by the school in the EYFS and the junior school, and its NC equivalence, is shown in the following tables.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Reception	EYFS

### ***Junior school***

J1	Years 1 and 2
J2	Years 3 and 4
J3	Years 5 and 6

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

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

- 2.1 Pupils are well educated in line with the school ethos. They flourish in a supportive and safe environment which nurtures their confidence. Pupils at all levels in the school achieve well in a range of academic and extra-curricular activities, and make sound progress in their learning. Their attitude to learning is excellent and they show exemplary behaviour and extremely good relationships with each other and with their teachers. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. The marking of pupils' work, however, does not always give sufficient guidance on what to do to improve. The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities with good links to the wider community. Pupils participate enthusiastically and achieve good levels of success in music, sport and drama. The majority of leavers go on to their first choice of university. On some occasions, the pupils are insufficiently challenged because the opportunities for more independent learning or for work matched to pupils' abilities are limited. The school has begun to address this though, for example through focus classes in the junior school to support both the more able and those who need additional support.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is outstanding, and is supported by excellent pastoral care, good welfare arrangements and effective health and safety procedures. Pupils have a strongly developed spiritual awareness. At the same time, in a multi-ethnic community, pupils are highly respectful of each other's differences and co-operate well when working together. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and understand the need for rules in any society. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in the school. Their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves is indicated by their support of a children's home in India.
- 2.3 Governance is good. The aims of the school are fulfilled and promoted by the governing body, which is committed to the academic and personal development of pupils. The governors have good oversight of most aspects of the school and have re-established an education committee to more closely review education policy and provision. The leadership and management of the school are good. Since the last inspection the school has improved its systems for verifying the applications of those seeking posts at the school. The senior management has also responded to the recommendations of the last report about developing ICT and has set in train work on the establishment of efficient monitoring systems, to assist in target setting, although more work in both of these aspects is still to be done. The school promotes excellent links with parents, whose replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly favourable.

## **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 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- ensure that regard is made to the Department for Education (DfE) Guidance *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* [Part 3, paragraph 12, under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified the above shortcoming, as noted in the text of the report.

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the school's best practice in marking is adopted and monitored throughout the school.
  2. Ensure that the targets set for each pupil are realistic and challenging.
  3. Continue to respond to the impact of increased numbers of boarders on provision.
  4. Ensure that all tasks in the EYFS are appropriately challenging.

### **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 are well educated and the good quality of their achievements successfully fulfils the school's aim to deliver successful educational achievements.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve well in a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils of all ages listen well and follow instructions diligently and carefully. They reason and argue cogently and contribute thoughtfully in discussions. Reading is a strength throughout the school. Pupils are very neat and methodical in the way they keep notes. They take considerable pride in the quality of what they produce although the presentation of their work is variable. Pupils are able to think logically and creatively and work independently although the opportunities to do so are not consistently developed. Good examples of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) were observed in specialist lessons, but few examples were seen of ICT integrated into work in other specialist subjects. Sixth-formers are confident and articulate, including those for whom English is an additional language: these have clearly become independent and well-motivated individuals.
- 3.3 Pupils are successful in a number of activities, including art, music, sport, drama and dance. Their individual talents are nurtured and they develop in self-respect and self-confidence. Many achieve well in graded drama examinations, often gaining distinctions and merits. Individual and team sporting successes are well established in a wide range of sports at local and county level. Other notable achievements include winning silver and gold medals at local flower shows. This success owes much to the pupils' positive attitudes, the good opportunities provided by the curriculum and the quality of teaching they receive. The vast majority of pupils achieve places at their first choice of university.
- 3.4 The ability profile of the junior school is broadly in line with the national average, although year group sizes are small and the ability of individual pupils varies from below to far above the national average. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests have been below the national average for maintained primary schools. The numbers involved, however, are very small and it is difficult therefore to make meaningful comparisons with national averages. The 2010 results showed a marked improvement on previous years, although as yet there are no comparative national data available for these tests.
- 3.5 Results in GCSE have been similar to the national average for maintained secondary schools, and in 2009 the results were significantly better than the national average. For example, in the academic year 2008 to 2009 at GCSE two-fifths of grades were either A\* or A, three-fifths were grade B or better, and over four-fifths of all grades were A\* to C. Three-quarters of the candidates gained a minimum of five higher-grade GCSEs, and nearly every pupil in the year attained at least five GCSE passes.
- 3.6 At A2 and AS level, numbers have been very small in individual subjects and it is not possible to make reliable comparisons with national averages. In addition, a large proportion of pupils who enter the sixth form do not have English as a first language. Nevertheless the good attainment seen in the main part of the Senior School is sustained into the sixth form.



- 3.7 Pupils, including those with LDD or EAL, make sound progress over time in relation to their ability, which for those in the juniors is in line with the national average and for seniors is above the national average. Scrutiny of written work shows that pupils make sound progress. Pupils' successful achievement is supported by their excellent attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour, and the very good relationships enjoyed between themselves and staff members. Pupils are well motivated, concentrate and persevere with their work and show dedication to their studies.

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

- 3.8 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is good. The curriculum is broadly based and balanced, and successfully provides for pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. Design and technology is covered by food technology, textiles and ICT. Pupils have good opportunities to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. The school's comprehensive policy documents set out the curriculum and promote its implementation throughout the school. The curriculum supports the aims of the school.
- 3.9 The provision of a comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities and links with the community, across both the junior and senior schools, together with work experience in Year 10, enriches the pupils' experiences. These activities are popular with the pupils. The range includes community events hosted by the school, a school stand at local shows, Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme activities and community service, geography and other field trips. Pupils endorse such provision. In Year 10, there is consideration of feelings, emotions and health. In the sixth form, specialist speakers have given talks on parliament, and drugs. Pupils' knowledge of religions is wide, and provision in religious education (RE) allows a broad understanding of a variety of cultures.
- 3.10 Significant and positive changes to the provision since the last inspection include the improvement of ICT facilities by the furnishing of two new ICT suites and a wireless network, and the adoption of a revised reporting system to parents. Both of these follow the previous report's recommendations.
- 3.11 The school prepares the pupils well for the next stage of their development and for adult life. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are prepared well for further education and careers opportunities in conjunction with a careers service, and pupils in Year 13 feel that they have received valuable help with preparing for university and other higher education entry.
- 3.12 The school meets the curricular requirements of all pupils identified as requiring special provision, including those with EAL and those with SEN. The learning disabilities department is particularly well organised in providing for pupils with LDD, both through withdrawal of pupils from class and through its provision of support for pupils in mainstream lessons.

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

- 3.13 The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good, with some outstanding lessons. The most successful teaching is characterised by thoughtful planning, good pace and probing questions. In many lessons observed the pace was brisk, pupils' concentration was sustained and there was a clear sense of excitement in

learning. Praise and encouragement were used to good effect in the majority of lessons.

- 3.14 Teachers have good subject knowledge and good class control. In some subjects teachers successfully use a variety of teaching approaches. For example, imaginative use is made of peer evaluation to encourage learning in physical education, and of paired work to great effect in English, EAL and history, and role play is often used in junior school lessons. In music, teachers allowed groups to work independently and creatively when writing and performing their compositions. However, on some occasions pupils are insufficiently challenged because the opportunities for more independent learning or for work matched to pupils' abilities are limited. The school has begun to address this though, for example through focus classes in the junior school to support both the more able and those who need additional support.
- 3.15 Within the development of the school's ICT provision, interactive whiteboards have been made available for use in many classrooms. Such technology was used effectively in ICT to demonstrate how to use features of a program; a clip was used to illustrate the use of percentages in a Year 7 mathematics lesson and in the junior school the younger pupils were shown an amusing animated presentation entitled 'What's the time, Mr Wolf?' However, in general, insufficient use is made of this facility. Classrooms are well resourced, with resources used effectively by teachers to stimulate learning. For example, in the junior school, teddy bears with reduced price labels were used to compare percentages and fractions. In the senior school the science laboratories are well equipped.
- 3.16 Feedback to pupils is variable, and questionnaire responses identified this as an issue for many pupils. Pupils say that staff are outstanding at giving a lot of time to provide oral feedback, either during the lesson whilst pupils are working or outside of lessons. On the other hand, the marking that is done is inconsistent throughout the school. During the inspection, the best marking seen was regular, careful and encouraging of pupils' efforts, with positive and helpful comments and targets. However, much marking is cursory, with little use of written comments to indicate when pupils have done well and what they could do to improve their work.
- 3.17 In the last inspection the school was encouraged to continue to develop tracking systems to incorporate and facilitate pupil target setting. Progress in this aspect has been made, so that secure tracking systems are in place in the junior school and pupils at all ages understand from their periodic reports where they are and what they should do to improve. Nevertheless, the systems used in the senior school detrimentally vary across subjects. The school's development plan appropriately has this as an area for improvement in the current academic year.
- 3.18 Teachers throughout the school receive well-evidenced reports about any pupil they are teaching who has a specific learning difficulty. The school is in the process of developing a register of those who might be gifted or talented.

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

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and successfully meets the aims of the school. Pupils throughout the school enjoy excellent friendships with each other and interact well with their teachers. The strong ethos of care, community and personal responsibility, together with happy and respectful relationships, confirms that the school has maintained and increased the high quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development evident at the last inspection. Pupils appreciate their school and speak highly of the close relationships they have with staff.
- 4.2 Weekly whole-school assemblies take place in the Great Hall, a nineteenth-century panelled and galleried hall, which stimulates an atmosphere of awe and wonder, leading to quiet contemplation and spiritual enlightenment. Pupils' spiritual development is good and is nurtured through regular assemblies with the school chaplain, visits to the village church and visits from other local clergy. Broad understanding of, respect for and interest in the beliefs and values of pupils from a range of faiths within the school community are built on in lessons, and in discussions in RE.
- 4.3 Pupils show excellent moral development. They are friendly and outgoing, and their manners and behaviour are exemplary. Older pupils articulate their ideas clearly and with conviction. Pupils live harmoniously together in mutual support. The younger pupils share well and are considerate towards each other. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and respect the school rules. They understand the need for rules in any society. Pupils show compassion for others and readily involve themselves in charitable activities and fund-raising events.
- 4.4 Pupils are eager to support each other, to take responsibility within the school and be involved in the wider community. An effective whole-school house system encourages team spirit and a sense of working together towards a common purpose. Pupils have a developing understanding of public institutions, democracy and the wider community, and the school council provides opportunities for class representatives to attend regular meetings and to bring ideas forward for general discussion. Many pupils benefit from opportunities to participate in the life of the school as prefects, house captains and deputies.
- 4.5 Pupils' well-developed cultural awareness is enriched by the positive manner in which the school promotes cultural tolerance and harmony within its own community. Pupils clearly develop an empathy with those from other cultural traditions, and this is supported by sharing and celebrating each other's cultural events such as Chinese New Year, themed social evenings and cultural assemblies led by pupils. They value different ideas and traditions. The school maintains close links with Lara House, a children's home in Tamil Nadu in Southern India. Pupils are prepared well for life outside the school environment. They also develop their natural abilities and talents through learning and participation in drama, music, dance and art, and entertain parents and local residents from time to time in the presentation and celebration of concerts, festivals and recitals.

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

- 4.6 Pastoral care is excellent and the contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good. Both make a significant impact on the life of the pupils. The excellent quality of pastoral care supports and guides the pupils, allowing them to be themselves and to develop confidence whilst learning to value and respect others. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), which is delivered in a dedicated timetable slot, allows staff to develop the strong relationships that characterise the school. The programme includes visits from outside speakers to tackle complex issues, as well as exercises in thinking skills and thorough coverage of child protection matters. An example of how the school ensures its pupils' safety was in a Year 7 form time, when pupils were reminded about the dangers of using internet chat-rooms.
- 4.7 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour. Relationships between staff and pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. During the inspection, praise and encouragement were evident. The record of sanctions shows that few sanctions are required, and parents are actively involved when sanctions are taken. Pupils understand clearly the reward system used in the school and respond accordingly. Assemblies are used to celebrate successes. In this environment, pupils thrive to become secure, considerate young people.
- 4.8 Robust and clear procedures to guard against bullying are in place and are implemented effectively. Pupils report that bullying is not an issue and that they can rely on staff to deal with incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils understand clearly the channels of communication open to them and are confident to talk to any member of staff if a problem requires resolution. Younger pupils feel able to share problems with older pupils. The school council meets regularly, and pupils report that changes are effected as a result. The 'eco council' is equally successful, making a noticeable impact on the running of the school.
- 4.9 In the sixth form, pupils take on roles of responsibility, such as those of Head Girl and Head of House, and reported that they gain much from the experience, with staff placing great trust in them.
- 4.10 The safeguarding of pupils is good. The policy for this is in place and available to parents. The procedures for the appointment of new staff, including ancillary and agency staff, are carried out with meticulous care. Staff receive regular and rigorous safeguarding and child protection training. Necessary measures to reduce risks from fire and other hazards are in place. These are regularly reviewed and updated. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective, and include an appropriately staffed medical facility readily accessible to pupils. The school has a suitable plan to increase its accessibility.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily, and report that meals are varied and nutritionally balanced. Recent complaints about the availability of food throughout a sitting have been successfully resolved with input from the school council. Pupils are encouraged to take plenty of exercise, with additional opportunities provided through the pupils' involvement in games and physical activities. Admission and attendance registers are regularly and properly maintained and have been stored appropriately.

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

- 4.12 The quality of the boarding experience is good, playing a valuable part in the pupils' education and development. The positive relationships in boarding between house staff and pupils contribute substantially to the welfare of the pupils, with high standards of care evident and sensitive support and counselling for personal problems available if necessary. House staff know their pupils very well and pupils value this; they feel that they always have someone to turn to in the house. Pupils comment favourably on the strong sense of family and community in the house and across the school in general.
- 4.13 The house is manned by four dedicated members of staff. There are regular activities and trips at weekends and in which day pupils can also participate, but the number of these available to individual pupils has diminished as numbers have increased. Activities are arranged to encourage overseas pupils to integrate with other pupils and feel at home, with careful allocation of pupils within the house ensuring a mix that encourages overseas pupils to develop language skills, as well as feeling socially at ease.
- 4.14 Responses to the parental questionnaire indicated that a small minority now had some concerns with the boarding provision as a result of the increases in numbers. Although it is clear that pupils have adapted to the increase in those boarding, it is clear that this has put extra demands on the accommodation, with increased use of facilities and less individual space available.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good. The governing body provides good, forward-looking leadership, effective oversight of the school and a clear sense of direction. It has a clear strategic view of increasing numbers in the school, and at the time of the inspection was on the point of initiating a new five-year strategic plan. It has recently returned to an earlier practice of having an educational committee in order to inform the governing body as a whole on educational practice and progress.
- 5.2 The arrangements for governance and the structure of the governing body are appropriate. Governors bring a wide range of experience to their work, including financial and legal expertise and educational experience. A further important perspective is effected by the inclusion of both a teacher representative and a parent representative. Governors are well informed about the school through the termly headmaster's report, and through visiting the school.
- 5.3 The governors are well aware of their responsibilities and are closely involved in educational development and financial planning, and these are effective in ensuring educational provision and continuing investment in resources. The governors understand clearly their legal obligations with regard to the independent schools regulations, boarding and Early Years provision. There are particular governors with responsibilities for health and safety and pupil safeguarding.

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

- 5.4 The recently appointed headmaster provides enlightened and perceptive leadership. He has been strong in establishing a strategic direction for the school under the guidance of the governing body. He knows the staff and pupils well, is approachable and leads by example.
- 5.5 The headmaster is supported very well by the members of the senior management team (SMT). The SMT carries a heavy teaching load, and works well with the headmaster to develop and implement the policies and procedures which support the running of the school. The SMT meets on a weekly basis to discuss week-to-week running of the school. Finding time for the school to meet for longer term developmental work across the school is more difficult, both because of the teaching commitments of the SMT and the fact that a large proportion of the staff work part-time.
- 5.6 Whole-school policies and guidance are comprehensive and well organised, and meet the needs of the school well. Those in charge of subjects in the senior school and the Key Stage Co-ordinators in the junior school are effective in their administration. This is reflected in the good quality of the education, care and the excellent pastoral support and welfare provided by the school.
- 5.7 Those with management responsibilities are effective in analysing the school's needs, setting priorities, planning to meet those priorities, and putting decisions into practice. The self-evaluation of the school submitted for the inspection was accurate; in some respects it underestimated the successes of the school.
- 5.8 The school development plan provides an appropriate set of objectives, especially with regard to the school's making better use of pupil performance data. However,

until this is complete the school will not be well placed to take the step of raising at whole-school level the expectations of what can be achieved in academic terms by pupils.

- 5.9 The school has been effective in securing and supporting well-qualified, experienced staff who are committed, hard-working and caring, and who fully embrace the aims and the objectives of the school. The school emphasises the importance of all its members being valued and working together as a team, and all staff feel a valued part of the school community. Appropriate checks are carried out on staff applying for posts in the school.
- 5.10 The school supports the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs), and has a well-structured formal appraisal system for teachers. Members of the non-teaching staff are much-valued members of the school community. The day-to-day running of the school is effectively managed by the administrative staff. Financial resources are very carefully managed under the effective control of the bursar, and the school is able to provide adequate and often good quality resources for teaching. The maintenance and cleaning staff keep the school in a safe and clean condition.

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

- 5.11 The quality of links between the school and parents is excellent and has improved since the last inspection. The school maintains constructive relationships with parents. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school. Almost all of those who responded said that they felt that the school helps their children to make progress and that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and caring guidance. They are satisfied with the information they receive about their daughters' progress and are aware that policies and procedures are readily available. Parents appreciate the extra-curricular opportunities and are very satisfied with the high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes endorsed by the school.
- 5.12 Parents have good opportunities to be involved actively in the work and progress of their children. They are welcomed into school to attend assemblies, accompany trips out of school, assist in the library, listen to children read and discuss the progress of their children's work with the teaching staff regularly. They can serve on the governing body. The website provides parents and prospective parents with useful information about school policies and procedures, and the school newsletter 'Adcote News' keeps parents informed of events and of pupils' activities and successes. Overall, the school reports are well structured, informative and helpful. They give parents a clear and detailed account of their daughters' progress.
- 5.13 The parent and teacher association provides strong links with the whole school community. Its main aim is to raise funds for the school through a wide range of social activities.
- 5.14 Complaints by parents are extremely rare and usually resolved informally. The inspection evidence indicates that the effective positive systems the school has in place ensure that parental concerns are mainly dealt with promptly and with due care and attention.

**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 Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teaching is good, enthuses the children, and promotes confidence and self-esteem. Children are eager to learn. Occasionally, tasks lack adequate challenge. Each child is known well to staff and is treated as a valued and unique individual. The caring environment and the growing partnership with parents who describe the school as providing a friendly, supportive atmosphere and individual attention, gives children a warm, secure start to their education. The inspection findings support parents' views on the provision. There is strong capacity to maintain present standards, and to improve them through self-assessment that acknowledges strengths and identifies areas for further improvement.

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

6.2 Provision for children's welfare, including safeguarding, is robust. Children are highly aware of the need to be safe. The setting works closely with parents who come into school to share their expertise. Parents are highly supportive of the setting. Policies and procedures are detailed, and most are effective in ensuring that children's needs are met. The new leader has a strong sense of purpose, and an ambition for excellence and is committed to continuous improvement. The classroom is bright and cheerful. The secure outdoor area is used appropriately and adds an additional dimension to children's learning. Resources indoors are adequate and of good quality and are used skilfully to promote the children's learning.

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

6.3 Planning is detailed and follows a theme which is used skilfully in many of the Early Years areas of learning. Daily plans evolve as assessment indicates where emphasis needs to change. The leader has good understanding of the EYFS framework and is confident in helping children to learn. The balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities involving choice, exploration and discovery has steadily improved. This increasingly enables children to develop as independent learners who can make decisions and organise themselves. The staff show constant concern for the children's well-being, and well-run routines ensure a calm and enquiring atmosphere in which children thrive.

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

6.4 Overall, the outcomes for children are good. Children make steady gains in their learning and have increasingly good levels of achievement. By the end of the EYFS children usually achieve the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning, and in some areas they exceed them. Children's success in their personal development is evident. They have very good social and communication skills. Children show good levels of focused enjoyment. They listen keenly, answer questions enthusiastically and are confident to make reasoned guesses. Children have an increasingly clear



understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and the need for good hygiene. They have very good awareness of personal safety and use equipment carefully, and are friendly, courteous and considerate of one another.

**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 boarding house 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**

Dr Stephen Grounds	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Mary Regan	Former Head, ISA school
Mrs Janet Cooper	Former Head of Preparatory School, ISA school
Mrs Angela Ashton	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Ian Edwards	Assistant Head, GSA school
Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector