



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HURSTPIERPOINT COLLEGE SENIOR SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hurstpierpoint College Senior School

The preparatory and pre-preparatory schools were inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Hurstpierpoint College Senior School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>938/6206</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1076498</b>		
Address	<b>Hurstpierpoint College Senior School College Lane Hurstpierpoint Hassocks West Sussex BN6 9JS</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01273 833636</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01273 835257</b>		
Email Address	<b>info@hppc.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Tim Manly</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Rear Admiral Simon Moore</b>		
Age Range	<b>13 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>630</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (363 boys; 267 girls)</b>		
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>293</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	<b>213</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>337</b>		
	Full: <b>14</b>	Weekly:	<b>110</b>
Inspection dates	<b>25 Jan 2011 to 26 Jan 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in February 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to 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 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.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in June 2007 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) 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>
The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills	2
The quality of the pupils' personal development	3
The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	4
<b>3 ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	5
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	5
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>6</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hurstpierpoint College is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of four to eighteen. The senior school takes pupils from the ages of thirteen to eighteen. The headmaster of the senior school is the overall head of the college. The college is a charitable trust, administered by a governing council that governs the whole college. It is one of the Woodard Schools, and was opened in 1849 as an all-boys' senior school. It is founded on the practice and teaching of the Church of England and as such, school life encompasses Christian values. The college, whose original name was St John's Middle Grammar School, moved to its present site in 1853. It is located in a rural position eight miles north of Brighton. The college comprises a preparatory school, a pre-preparatory school and the senior school. Some facilities are shared. The school has been fully co-educational since 1995. Just over half the pupils board, mostly on a flexi-boarding basis at a minimum of three nights a week, or on a weekly basis. A small number of pupils in the sixth form, mostly from overseas, board full-time. The majority of pupils join the senior school at the age of thirteen following Common Entrance or scholarship examinations, for those applying from outside the college, and through the school's own internal examinations, for those within the preparatory school.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 630 pupils on the roll. The school has identified 170 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom 117 receive support for their learning. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Sixteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), twelve of whom receive support for their language needs. The great majority of pupils are of white British background, and come from professional, business or rural families within a 25-mile radius of the school. The ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.3 The over-arching aim of the college is to provide a genuinely excellent, all-round education with a strong academic core for each pupil, within which the senior school aims to ensure that pupils are ready for the challenges that lie ahead, and are properly equipped to make a success of their future lives. Pupils are expected to thrive and excel, join strong communities, make friendships that last a lifetime and take away memories that they will value over the years ahead.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

### **Senior School**

School	NC name
Shell	Year 9
Remove	Year 10
Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 The overall quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent, reflecting the school's aim to provide a genuinely excellent all-round education with a strong academic core for each pupil. The pupils are confident and articulate speakers who express themselves clearly, write fluently and have a very good grasp of mathematical and scientific concepts. They work effectively with computers across the curriculum and demonstrate good keyboard skills. Their creative and artistic skills are evident throughout the school in the displays of art work and the high number of drama, dance and music productions performed each year. Pupils of all ages reach excellent standards in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, performing well in a variety of sporting competitions as well as in graded music and drama examinations. Many pupils enjoy significant personal and team success in both county and national sport. The pupils also compete successfully in areas such as the International Chemistry Olympiad UK, Young Enterprise and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The majority of the pupils go on to universities, mostly to their first choice.
- 2.2 Standards are above average overall. Results at GCSE and A level in 2007 to 2009, the last three years for which comparative data are available, have been above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the average for maintained selective schools. Examination results improved in 2010, with just over 24 per cent of GCSE pupils being awarded A\* grades and nearly half of A-level grades at A\* or A. These results, confirmed by inspection evidence of highly supportive teaching and the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, indicate that pupils, including those with LDD or EAL, make good progress overall at all stages when compared with others of similar ability.
- 2.3 Attitudes to learning are outstanding throughout the school. The pupils take great pride in their work and participate enthusiastically in their lessons. They learn to manage their time well. On reaching the sixth form, the pupils have developed a good capacity to work independently, taking responsibility for their own learning and reflecting well the school's aim to foster academic entrepreneurship. The pupils benefit from excellent curricular and extra-curricular provision, which is rated highly both by them and their parents.
- 2.4 The quality of teaching is excellent, fulfilling the school's aim of 'no-one beneath radar, no-one on the bench'. Teachers are knowledgeable, supportive and committed to getting the best from their pupils. They plan their lessons well, use a good range of resources and consider how to improve the pupils' skills in independent learning. Pupils with EAL or LDD, including those with statements of special educational needs, are supported effectively, enabling them to achieve as well as their peers in relation to their ability. There is good provision for the most able, gifted and talented, both through classroom support and through the excellent range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Marking and assessment are of good quality, and excellent use is made of the challenge grade system to ensure that the pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work.

## **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.5 The personal development of the pupils is excellent across the school. They speak with great pride about their school, valuing its sense of community and ethos. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Their spiritual awareness is successfully developed through the Christian ethos of the school. They appreciate the services taken by the school chaplain in the beautiful school chapel. All pupils are encouraged to develop their own character and to value the beliefs of others. They show a very good understanding of artistic endeavour and the world beyond the material. They value good conduct, expressed in the 'Hurst Cultural Challenge'. Through discussions with pupils, it is clear that they have a strong sense of right and wrong, and appreciate the value of fairness. Most perceive the systems of rewards and sanctions to be fair and equitable. However, a significant minority feel there is some inconsistency over the administration of sanctions for minor instances of misbehaviour and inspection evidence supports this view. They have highly developed social skills, and are ready to face the world and its challenges by the time they leave the school. The pupils demonstrate a pronounced awareness of cultural matters, both in terms of cultural diversity and their understanding of literature, and the creative and performing arts.
- 2.6 Pastoral care, based upon the strong house system, is excellent, focusing closely on the needs and welfare of the individual. The pupils say there is always somebody to turn to if they have a concern. In pre-inspection questionnaires and in interviews, the pupils said overwhelmingly that they like being in the school. They feel safe and valued, and do not perceive bullying to be a problem.
- 2.7 The safety and welfare of the pupils are given the highest priority. Anti-bullying and safeguarding arrangements are secure. A comprehensive safeguarding programme means that all staff receive the necessary training in child protection. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are very effective. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Risk assessments are rigorous and regularly reviewed. First aid policies and practices are clear, with good provision for pupils who are ill. The school maintains suitable admission and attendance registers. The required checks to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children have been undertaken.
- 2.8 The strong boarding experience plays a valuable part in the pupils' education and personal development, and contributes effectively to the fulfilment of the school's aims. The boarders are proud of their houses and describe them as welcoming, homely and fun. The friendships that develop, the opportunity to spend time with their peers and the enjoyment of the activities on offer were all given by the boarders as reasons for enjoying boarding life.

## **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.9 The governance of the school is excellent. The governing council has good mechanisms in place to provide effective oversight of the work of the school, and to draw up and monitor key policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Governors take a very active interest in all areas of the school's work through regular attendance at school events and through excellent links between designated governors and individual departments. They are fully supportive of the school's management and offer an excellent breadth of professional skills and expertise. Communication between the chair of governors and the headmaster is regular and open.
- 2.10 Excellent leadership, with a clear vision for the future development of the school, is supported by effective management, evident in the outcomes of contented pupils who are keen to learn. Self-evaluation is used very well to build on the school's strengths, and to highlight areas needing further development. Detailed and well-considered policies and procedures support the school's work well. The premises and accommodation are well maintained, are of good quality and enhance the educational experience of the pupils.
- 2.11 The partnerships with parents are excellent. In pre-inspection questionnaires, the parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction with all aspects of the quality of education and care provided. They are warmly welcomed to the school and any concerns are dealt with sensitively and promptly. There are suitable arrangements for handling complaints. Parents are provided with all required information. They receive regular and detailed material about their children's progress and achievements through an excellent electronic portal as well as through newsletters, magazines and a very good range of formal and informal meetings with staff.



### **3. ACTION POINTS**

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

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

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Clarify guidance to staff on the administration of sanctions for minor misdemeanours.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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

### **Inspectors**

Dr Lynn Bappa

Mr John Tolputt

Mrs Fiona Hallworth

Reporting Inspector

Former Head, SHMIS school

Director of External Relations, HMC school