



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

NORWICH HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS GDST

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Norwich High School for Girls GDST
DfE Number	926/6123
Registered Charity Number	306983
Address	Norwich High School for Girls GDST 95 Newmarket Road Norwich Norfolk NR2 2HU
Telephone Number	01603 453265
Fax Number	01603 259891
Email Address	admin@nor.gdst.net
Head	Mr Jason Morrow
Chair of Governors	Mr Stephen Thomson
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	765
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	3-5(EYFS): 26 5-11: 191 11-16: 425 16-18: 123
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 765
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Jennifer Green
EYFS Gender	Girls
Inspection dates	06 Feb 2012 to 09 Feb 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State 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, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

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

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning 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 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors 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.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Dr Joe Tierney	Reporting Inspector
Mr Chris Davies	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Roberta Georghiou	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Fiona McGill	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mrs Anne Price	Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Stephane Talleux	Team Inspector (Assistant Director, GSA school)
Mrs Penny Oates	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	7
(c) The contribution of teaching	8
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	11
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	11
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	12
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	13
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
(a) The quality of governance	14
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	14

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Norwich High School for Girls, founded in 1875, is one of 26 schools of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST). Set in 13 acres of grounds, a mile-and-a-half from the city centre, the school provides an education for girls aged 3 to 18 years.
- 1.2 The Council of the GDST has overall responsibility for the school, but a separate body of governors is a source of advice and support at local level.
- 1.3 The school aims to be an outstanding school which fulfils and enriches the expectations of pupils, parents and teachers by ensuring a high quality education is within the reach of all girls of ability, regardless of social background, ethnic origin or religion. They intend to achieve this within a framework which: values and respects the individual and teaches the individual to value and respect others; fosters and preserves a love of learning, a sense of enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity and an enquiring attitude; seeks to develop tolerance, understanding and consideration for the needs of others; encourages pupils to seek a full, rich and rewarding experience of life and to take a useful, caring place in society; fosters pride in being a member of the school; approaches education from a moral viewpoint.
- 1.4 The Polliwiggle Nursery offers pre-school education for girls aged from three plus to Reception and is housed in a self-contained building with its own enclosed garden and outdoor play area. The senior school occupies a Regency mansion (Eaton Grove), with the junior school (Stafford House) and the sixth-form centre (Lanchester House) nearby.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above average. In the junior school most pupils have an ability that is average or above average. Data on pupils entering the senior school in Year 7 shows that all pupils are at least above average, and over a quarter have an ability that is well above average. Pupils entering the sixth form are also above the national average, but with a wider spread of abilities than in Year 7.
- 1.6 There are 765 pupils on roll, including 123 in the sixth form, 191 in the junior school, and 26 in the EYFS. The school draws its pupils from a wide area covering the whole of Norfolk and north Suffolk, mainly from academic, business and professional families. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs but 14 pupils in the senior school and two in the junior school have been identified as having special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Twenty-one pupils in the senior school and thirty-eight in the juniors receive some form of extra support in their learning, mainly with their language. For five pupils in the senior school and one in the junior school, English is not their first language. Most pupils are of white British origin and others have their family heritage elsewhere in Europe and the Indian sub-continent.
- 1.7 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 tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Reception	Reception

Junior School

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Year 1
Lower I	Year 2
Upper I	Year 3
Lower II	Year 4
Upper II	Year 5
Lower III	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
Upper III	Year 7
Lower IV	Year 8
Upper IV	Year 9
Lower V	Year 10
Upper V	Year 11
Lower VI	Year 12
Upper VI	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school achieves excellent standards in much that it does. Good teaching in both the junior and senior schools means that pupils attain good academic standards and achieve well. The extensive range of the co-curricular provision offered in both schools and the pupils' enthusiastic response to it means that their achievements are excellent and gives them a breadth of education which makes a significant impact on their academic and personal development. Results at GCSE over the last three years have been similar to those of selective maintained schools, suggesting that the school achieves well and that good progress is made by pupils. They also make good progress from GCSE to A level. In the junior school, results in national tests at age 11 have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools. The overall effectiveness of the EYFS setting is excellent. It fulfils the school's aim of ensuring that a high-quality education is provided to girls of ability, regardless of social background, ethnic origin or religion, through a wide-ranging curriculum which lays the foundation for children's later learning and has regard to their present individual needs. All children make good progress in their learning, demonstrate excellent personal development and benefit from excellent teaching. Formal and informal monitoring procedures are regularly applied and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement.
- 2.2 Excellent relationships and effective pastoral care ensure that pupils' personal development is also excellent. This results in happy and purposeful pupils who take a pride in their school, show a high level of maturity, and a dedication to their work which ensures success. The quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is excellent. Girls grow in confidence as they progress through the school and show consideration and sensitivity to the needs of others. A strong sense of community has been established based on the good relationships between pupils of all ages and in different sectors of the school.
- 2.3 Excellent governance, leadership and management are major contributing factors to the school's continuing improvement. They have ensured that the school meets all the regulatory requirements and that the welfare and safeguarding of pupils are secure. The Trust has played a significant role in this respect, as have the skills of the head and the leadership teams. Excellent leadership has ensured good improvement since the last inspection. In the senior school, the planning for development has improved, as has the marking and assessment of pupils' work. A system to monitor the quality of teaching has also been introduced. Improvements have been made to the school's accommodation, including the building of a sixth-form centre. The junior school has developed a cross-curricular approach to learning in Years 1, 2 and 5, given a greater focus to assessment and marking, and has strengthened the breadth of the curriculum. The EYFS setting has significantly improved the balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, both inside and outdoors.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. In the senior school, improve the departmental development plans so that they are sharper in focus and clearer in intent.
2. Bring the quality of all teaching up to the standards of the best.
3. Improve the use and quality of book stock in the senior library.
4. In the EYFS, improve the written reports to parents so that they are more tailored to the individual child and provide guidance as to their next steps.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

3.1 The quality of pupils' overall achievement is excellent.

Early Years Foundation Stage

3.2 Children make significant gains in their learning and have consistently good and often excellent levels of achievement with many reaching, and some exceeding, the Early Learning Goals on entry to Year 1. Children talk about their activities with great enthusiasm and clarity of expression. They are extremely articulate and their language and numeracy skills are strong. Children in Reception use letters, sounds and words to write independently and in Nursery they can solve the problem of where a given number fitted into a sequence to 20. They respond well to praise and encouragement and derive great pleasure from their learning.

Junior School

3.3 Pupils develop very good skills, knowledge and understanding in all their subjects and in the wide range of their co-curricular activities. Standards in writing and mathematics are high, particularly in the former where pupils write with confidence and maturity. Pupils are articulate; they can speak with precision and at length. Skill and sensitivity are evident in the high standards of art work on display. Pupils can adapt their skills well, for example when using information and communication technology (ICT) to illustrate their project work. Younger pupils are able to apply their basic skills in understanding more complex concepts as they progress through the school.

3.4 Pupils also achieve well in individual and team games, notably in netball, cross-country running and swimming. High standards are reached in various music examinations, as well as in speech and drama, writing and poetry competitions. At the age of 11, almost all pupils transfer to the senior school with some gaining a scholarship or award.

3.5 The ability profile of the junior school is slightly above the national average, with most pupils having an ability that is average or above average. Results in national tests at age 11 have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools, suggesting that pupils make progress that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Attainment in English is particularly high.

3.6 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least good progress. This is because of the good pace at which pupils work, their enthusiastic approach, and the good teaching. Their attitudes to work are invariably positive; they are determined to succeed and show perseverance to strive for their personal best. They settle to work quickly, are willing to ask questions, and are keen to discuss their work and ideas in lessons. This helps to develop both their self-confidence and listening skills.

Senior School

3.7 In both lessons and in their written work, pupils display high levels of knowledge and understanding, at times beyond that expected for their age.

- 3.8 Pupils' skills in speaking are a real strength. They talk fluently, with confidence and clarity, and are willing to ask questions. Articulate conversations were heard as a result of pupils working in pairs in Year 11 English.
- 3.9 Standards of literacy are high and written tasks are diligently completed to an excellent standard. The girls write with a fluency and ease borne out of confidence. In the best examples they show well-developed skills of rigour, organisation and presentation, such as in Year 12 work on the recent earthquake in Japan. Their listening and reading skills are excellent, both in terms of absorbing other people's views and in respecting them. They are good at extracting meaning from a speaker or a text, as seen in a Year 7 Latin class.
- 3.10 Pupils apply mathematical skills and concepts appropriately to problem-solving and data analysis in science and other subjects. They are competent users of ICT and carry out research on the internet, word process their work, and illustrate their talks with visual presentations.
- 3.11 Many girls have strengths in the creative and performing arts, as demonstrated in the high quality of art on display and in their successes in music, drama and dance. The extensive sport and physical education programme ensures that pupils attain good levels of physical activity and co-ordination, whether through traditional games, circuit training, or the Bollywood dancing and yoga available through the activities programme.
- 3.12 Pupils achieve very well in the extensive range of co-curricular activities offered. There has been a high level of representation at local, regional and national levels in a number of areas, such as sport and music. For example, girls attain very good results in music examinations; the chamber choir has received accolades and various quartets have won prizes. Success has also been achieved in The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts examinations whilst in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme girls have collected an impressive array of awards.
- 3.13 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009 to 2011, the most recent years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in the GCSE have been well above the national average for all maintained schools. Almost all pupils achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, and 70% of the grades awarded were A* or A. Results in IGCSE mathematics have been higher than the worldwide average. The A level results have been good in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability. At A level, four in five grades were A* or B and almost all were A* to E. For the more able pupils taking the extended project qualification level 3, half of the grades were A* and a quarter were A.
- 3.14 All pupils, including those whose first language is not English, and those receiving extra support with a specialist teacher, make good progress.
- 3.15 Pupils are extremely positive about their learning; they are enthusiastic, attentive and well-focused in lessons. Girls take a pride in their work, which is well organised and presented; they make the most of their lessons, working effectively, both on an individual basis and when collaborating with others.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.16 The provision for the curriculum and co-curricular activities is excellent.
- 3.17 The wide-ranging curriculum and enriching programme of activities cover the requisite areas of learning and meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities, so reflecting the school's aim to encourage pupils to seek a full, rich and rewarding experience of life.

Early Years Foundation Stage

- 3.18 An excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, extending seamlessly from indoors to outside, results in effective active and exploratory learning. An ethos has been created where children's views are valued; children have an active voice, they are listened to and their suggestions are acted upon.
- 3.19 Much learning is initiated by children; they are confident in making choices and feel secure with their key workers. There are good opportunities to take part in a range of co-curricular activities, such as cartoon club and gym club. Children are allowed to explore, learn and take closely monitored risks in a stimulating outdoor environment. There is effective provision for both the early identification of children's special needs and continued support. These children integrate fully and make very good progress. Children are prepared well for transfer to the junior school.

Junior School

- 3.20 The subjects of the National Curriculum are enhanced by drama and languages, notably French, German and Spanish from Year 3, and Latin from Year 4. Presently, pupils in Years 1, 2 and 5 follow a creative curriculum, whereby cross-curricular themes are developed.
- 3.21 Plans for the curriculum are detailed, including those for cross-curricular links. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well in their learning. Form teachers help to create individual education plans which are regularly up-dated and monitored. For those pupils requiring significant support for dyslexia, the school gains additional help from a specialist local centre. Those pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented are also monitored.
- 3.22 Pupils' class work is enriched by interesting visits, such as to a synagogue when studying Judaism or the theatre when considering the Victorian era. Residential trips are also used; pupils in Year 5 use a residential environmental centre and those in Year 6 make residential trips in both Yorkshire and France.
- 3.23 The broad and varied co-curricular programme is excellent. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments, join the choir or orchestra, or are prepared for external exams in music, speech and drama. The school enjoys a strong reputation in sport, the chess club is successful and dance and gymnastics are also part of the curriculum.

Senior School

- 3.24 A broad range of subjects is offered in the first three years, including Latin, a number of creative subjects and a second modern foreign language, German or Spanish. All pupils follow a nationally certificated course in ICT which equips them with suitable skills and allows them to research effectively. The curriculum has

recently been enhanced by the introduction of GCSE and A-level textiles, GCSE PE, critical thinking in Year 12, and extension courses in Year 13. A significant and successful change has been the re-shaped PE curriculum to facilitate a games afternoon.

- 3.25 The provision of personal, social and health education (PSHE), which runs from the Nursery to Year 13, is excellent. It includes topics from democracy to healthy eating, and prejudice to bereavement, using current news items to illustrate themes. The course successfully helps to foster respect for self and others. Girls enjoy the programme and value the lessons it teaches them about how to live well.
- 3.26 The provision for pupils with SEND and those with English as an additional language is effective. Pupils who receive individual help are supported well. In most cases, teachers' planning succeeds in meeting their needs, but this is not always the case. There are many opportunities for the more able to be challenged, through the extended project qualification and through the extension programme in Year 13, a very useful adjunct for university preparation.
- 3.27 Girls receive good careers information, advice and guidance, which they appreciate. The school succeeds in supplying appropriate information at key points in pupils' development.
- 3.28 The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of visits and trips within the UK and abroad. These add to the pupils' experiences and give a valuable insight into other people's lives and environments. In addition, there are exchanges with pupils in Germany and frequent visits from external speakers.
- 3.29 The excellent co-curricular programme is varied, comprehensive and stimulating. It includes strong provision for music, with a wide range of choirs, orchestras and ensembles. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme allows girls to develop initiative and a sense of service. Other activities include sport, drama, art and debating, in addition to a variety of clubs and societies offering an intellectual challenge. Some girls develop skills of leadership through community service where they enhance their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves; some help in a local special needs school, some teach Latin to local primary school children, and the choir performs in care homes for the elderly.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.30 The overall quality of teaching is good.

Early Years Foundation Stage

- 3.31 Teaching in the EYFS is excellent and in both the junior and the senior school it is good. In the EYFS, two in three lessons were good or better and none unsatisfactory. The dedication and professionalism of the teaching staff make a major contribution to the progress and achievement of pupils, which pupils of all ages appreciate.
- 3.32 Teachers have an excellent knowledge of the EYFS framework and work hard to provide a welcoming and stimulating environment where children's welfare is paramount. The adults are warm and enthusiastic, promoting an ethos that shows how they value each child as uniquely special. Thorough initial and continuing assessment procedures, based on regular observations, ensure that the next stage of learning for each child is clearly identified, including the setting of suitable targets.

Junior School

- 3.33 Most lessons are well planned, use resources such as interactive whiteboards to good effect, and proceed at a good pace. This means that pupils make good progress in fulfilling their potential, in line with the school's aims. In the best lessons tasks were set which suited the pupils' needs. Where all pupils in the class were set the same work, this limited the pace of some pupils' progress. In nearly all lessons, praise and encouragement were used well and this added to the pupils' confidence and personal development. Procedures of peer review and internal professional development have recently been introduced to help sustain the improvement evident since the last report.
- 3.34 Teachers provide well for pupils with SEND. All are aware of each child's difficulties and form teachers set individual plans and targets which are frequently assessed and reviewed. Gifted and talented pupils' needs are also monitored. Some specialist teaching is used, as in foreign languages, sport and music, but the form teacher maintains an overview of key core subject work right through to the end of Year 6.
- 3.35 The assessment of pupils' work is very good. In most instances it contains encouraging words, practical suggestions for improvement and appropriately set targets. Pupils also say that they look forward to receiving teachers' comments in the knowledge that they help them to improve.

Senior School

- 3.36 The majority of lessons are well planned, and the best include a variety of tasks to suit the different needs of pupils, including extension work for the more able. In such lessons, pupils are suitably challenged and thrive; they are encouraged to solve problems and develop their own methods, and their learning is rapid. In less successful lessons, the pace is slower, pupils are insufficiently engaged, or the planning does not provide for the range of needs in the class. Every teacher is made aware of the pupils with SEND, and in the best lessons support was given through the provision of individual work and guidance, but this was not always the case.
- 3.37 Relationship between pupils and teachers are excellent; pupils have confidence in their teachers, strive to do their best and respond well to the praise and encouragement given. The teachers have very good subject knowledge which adds rigour to the teaching.
- 3.38 The school recognises the need to improve further the opportunities for girls to learn independently and has recently appointed an assistant head with responsibility for teaching and learning. The girls relish chances to learn independently and take advantage of the many opportunities to continue learning outside the classroom, through activities, visits and competitions.
- 3.39 Pupils believe their teachers know and support them very well. Their work is marked regularly and usually contains constructive advice on how to improve, as well as marks and grades. In some cases this is extensive and learning is significantly improved by these pertinent comments. Each department adapts the school marking policy to fit its own needs, a system which works well because the pupils understand the system. Regular assessment allows teachers to identify and support under-achieving pupils. The progress and attainment of each pupil are monitored by

heads of departments and section heads, and effective use is made of baseline testing to monitor progress and set targets.

- 3.40 Interactive whiteboards and ICT are used very effectively in some lessons, allowing concepts and examples to be clearly illustrated but, on occasion, such facilities were not used to the best advantage. There is a good plan for development for the school library, which is managed well. Pupils appreciate the service offered and it makes a valuable contribution to their learning. However, some of the book stock is aging and needs to be replaced with more modern material. Some teachers liaise well with the librarian, but others' use of the library and the services offered is inconsistent.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils throughout the school is excellent and is a significant strength of the school.
- 4.2 During their time in the EYFS children develop a good awareness of personal safety and comply with the simple rules that relate to this. They display well developed self-help skills, for example knowing they must wash their hands before eating and wrapping up warmly to play out of doors. They learn how to be part of an audience when listening to a musical performance by the older pupils. Children enjoy physical activities, understanding that exercise and healthy eating will help make them strong. There are beneficial opportunities to mix with the older pupils, for instance in the after-school care facility.
- 4.3 As they progress through the school, pupils grow in confidence, consideration and sensitivity to the needs of others. They value the school community very highly and there are very warm relationships between pupils of all ages and in different sectors of the school. Through the extensive PSHE programme, girls consider many aspects of their own lives and those of others; they become increasingly confident in their ability to question stereotypes and challenge wrong-doing.
- 4.4 Pupils have a deep appreciation of the non-materialistic aspects of school life. They value the many opportunities they are given to learn about themselves and the world. They find beauty in their surroundings, the art displayed around the school and the music produced by the various groups. The Christmas service at Norwich Cathedral was frequently mentioned as a highlight of the school year. Assemblies often have religious or moral themes, particularly in the junior school. Pupils in the Lower School built a maze to symbolise the spiritual path in life, while the seniors collectively read the King James Bible to celebrate its 400th anniversary.
- 4.5 The girls develop strong moral values. They are very clear about the difference between right and wrong and support each other and those less fortunate than themselves, for example through a thriving Amnesty International group. Girls debate ethical issues in lessons and in the medical ethics group; they talk with courage and passion, showing good awareness of social and political issues.
- 4.6 Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility. For example, senior pupils organise clubs for younger pupils, help with swimming, and act as mentors. Year 5 and 6 pupils take their roles as monitors very seriously. The companies system allows girls in Years 7 to 13 to work together whilst the annual November Fair brings together pupils from all sections of the school.
- 4.7 Pupils of all ages organise charity events and the seniors serve the local community. The ability to help others is seen as a pleasure and a privilege rather than a duty.
- 4.8 Pupils learn of other cultures and societies through religious studies, assemblies, the PSHE programme and the numerous trips abroad. For example, there has been a recent trip to Martinique to study heritage, and it is intended that future work on human rights and slavery will include contact with schools in Romania and Seville. It was evident in some English lessons that pupils had a healthy appreciation of English literary culture. They enjoy the many musical performances in the school,

with many being active participants. Pupils have an understanding of life in different countries through the cultural trips undertaken.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.9 The quality of pastoral care throughout the school is excellent and affirms the school's aims and its belief that this underpins all that it does.
- 4.10 Relations between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are extremely loyal to the school and speak about their teachers with obvious fondness. When girls do not achieve well in lessons staff establish the reasons and give time to support them. Teachers are always available to help pupils with their work, as well as any pastoral concerns.
- 4.11 The pastoral structure in the senior school, in which tutors and section heads, strongly supported by a deputy head, play a key role, provides excellent care and support to the girls. Communication is very good. Section heads meet weekly with the deputy head and concerns are shared and addressed efficiently. Girls commented that they can turn to any member of staff with their concerns. Pupils in Year 7 also expressed their appreciation of the support from their Year 11 mentors. Pupils feel safe and happy in school. The recent introduction of a specialist counselling service has been beneficial, as has the weekly tutor period, which enables tutors to get to know their tutees better. Additional time given to section heads reflects the school's commitment to high quality pastoral care. Regular liaison between junior and senior school staff means that information is passed on, ensuring continuity of care. Induction days for new pupils enable them to settle quickly and are much appreciated.
- 4.12 Girls respond positively to the many opportunities for physical exercise and therefore to stay fit and healthy. They are encouraged to eat healthily, with modules on healthy eating included in the PSHE programme, notably in Years 5 and 8. School lunches provide a daily range of dishes, including a selection of healthy options. The salad bar and selection of fresh fruit are popular with the pupils.
- 4.13 Children's behaviour in the EYFS is generally exemplary, with only occasional gentle reminders being needed about manners. They are very considerate towards each other and learn to share and to form happy friendships. Elsewhere, pupils' conduct themselves very well around school and in lessons. Good behaviour is recognised and rewarded by tutors and communicated to parents. Pupils reported that there is very little bullying. When such incidents occur they are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and efficiently. Detailed records are kept in pupils' files and parents are invited into school to discuss specific issues. Pupils feel confident about talking to members of staff, who operate an open door policy.
- 4.14 The school has a good three-year accessibility plan to cater for the needs of any pupil with a disability. Through this a number of improvements to the buildings have been made, such as a ramp to the music school entrance, and a lift and disabled toilet facilities in the sixth-form centre.
- 4.15 Pupils' views are actively sought. They speak highly of the school councils and appreciate that they can inform decision-making. This includes the provision of a common room for Year 11, the introduction of a games afternoon, and the discussion on the school uniform. Pupils are now involved in the interviews of new staff and relish such opportunities.

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.16 The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent.
- 4.17 This was a strength noted at the last inspection but the school has worked hard in the intervening period to improve further its well-established procedures. In this, it receives the full support of the Trust.
- 4.18 Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are clearly described within a policy document that is published for parents on the school website. It is supported by appropriate staff training in child protection. The designated child protection officers ensure that appropriate support is given and recorded. All staff provide high levels of care for pupils. Senior girls have confidence approaching someone if they need help. The school has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy which is enhanced by a programme of advice on cyber bullying through assemblies and the PSHE programme.
- 4.19 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. The Trust has a clear policy and undertakes comprehensive fire safety risk assessments and records details of termly fire drills. The last Fire Officer's report required an annual review of the fire risk assessment and this has been carried out. Appropriate training records and the certification of the installation and maintenance of fire fighting systems and equipment are in place.
- 4.20 Arrangements and procedures to ensure health and safety are effective. The health and safety committee meets regularly and individual departments are currently carrying out a health and safety audit. Matters raised are considered a priority and dealt with promptly. The school's health and safety co-ordinator regularly checks progress and also oversees all training, including induction of new staff regarding health and safety matters.
- 4.21 The school nurse provides excellent care for all pupils who are ill or injured. She keeps up-to-date records of first aid training for staff. Facilities for pupils who are sick or injured are good, there being medical rooms in both the senior and junior schools. An appropriate policy for first aid is in place and the recording of accidents has been enhanced by the introduction of the Trust's electronic recording system which enables thorough follow-up and the spotting of any trends. This is helpful in accident prevention.
- 4.22 The electronic attendance and admissions registers are properly maintained, backed up monthly and correctly stored for three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent.
- 5.2 Effective governance has been a significant factor in the continued development and improvement of the school, in supporting the school in meeting its aims, and in fulfilling statutory requirements.
- 5.3 The Council of the GDST has overall responsibility for the school, but a separate body of local governors, with its own chair and called the School Governing Body, is a source of advice and support at local level. The Council has a series of sub-committees which cover the essential aspects of governance, for example health and safety, academic standards, auditing and investment. This structure ensures that the school receives very good support and guidance on matters such as ICT, training, financial planning, staffing, accommodation and resources, as well as regulatory matters. It is a significant factor in the school's success and in its provision for the welfare and safety of pupils.
- 5.4 The Trust has a firm understanding of the school's current provision. This is achieved through regular contact between the school and staff of the Trust, culminating in the undertaking of an annual review and target-setting exercise in conjunction with local governors. Furthermore, the School Governing Body has used guidelines from the Trust to review the school and to identify areas for improvement. It is also aided by regular reports from the head. Individual governors have also taken on specific roles, for example the education of pupils in the EYFS.
- 5.5 Regulatory matters, including those for safeguarding and child protection, are dealt with effectively.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.

Early Years Foundation Stage

- 5.7 The effectiveness of leadership and management in the EYFS is excellent. The shared roles of leadership and management work extremely well together in implementing the school's aims. Through their self-evaluation, teachers have a firm understanding of the provision's strengths and areas for development. They meet regularly for thoughtful planning and discussion relating to improving the outcomes for their pupils. Documentation is comprehensive and shows good attention to detail. All systems to safeguard children are in place, including staff training. Staff are suitably qualified and the required adult-to-child ratios are met. The adults are vigilant in ensuring that children are safe, and robust risk assessments, which are reviewed regularly, clearly identify potential hazards. Diversity and inclusion are a hallmark of the provision. Effective links with external agencies, including the GDST and the local authority, offer additional support for staff, thereby extending the skills, training and information available to them. All areas are extremely well resourced

and the children benefit from using some of the teaching areas available to the wider school community, such as the swimming pool.

Junior and Senior Schools

- 5.8 Excellent leadership and management of the whole school and of the junior school are major factors in establishing high standards of education and pastoral care and in helping the school to achieve its aims. The head of the school has been recently appointed but, through his style of leadership, an atmosphere of openness, inclusivity and adventure has been established which has led to a positive working environment where both teachers and pupils are enthusiastic about their work and the future direction of the school. Heads of department in the senior school and staff with responsibility in the junior school have all played their part.
- 5.9 The school and the Trust have worked together well to evaluate the present provision and to produce clear and appropriate priorities and plans for future development. Systems for self-evaluation are effective. Subject departments in the senior school undertake an annual review which is discussed with members of the senior leadership team, and heads of departments evaluate their work through the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. They produce development plans which relate to the whole-school plan; these are variable in quality and some lack sharpness of focus and clarity of intent. However, this is an improvement since the last inspection.
- 5.10 Communication is good and roles are well defined. Policies are clear and implemented well; they cover all aspects of school life, including such matters as the safeguarding of pupils and equality of opportunity.
- 5.11 Recent recruitment of staff has been beneficial; for example, the appointment of two new assistant heads has boosted the areas of co-curricular provision and academic development. The induction of new staff is good and teachers have enhanced their professional skills through the extensive range of training courses offered by the Trust. Arrangements for the appointment and checking of staff are thorough, as is the training for welfare, health and safety and safeguarding.
- 5.12 The school listens to the views of parents and has recently conducted its own survey. The responses to the parental questionnaire for the inspection show a high rate of satisfaction with the educational provision provided. Parents say that their children are safe, secure and well looked after; they are particularly pleased with the breadth of the curriculum. A minority are dissatisfied by the school's response to concerns and the way in which it responds to cases of bullying. However, the inspectors found that the school took such matters very seriously and was pro-active in both these areas. In fact, the school receives very few formal complaints, but all concerns are treated seriously and records are kept. The very strong partnership with parents in the EYFS is based on excellent two-way communication.
- 5.13 The quality of reporting to parents has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In addition, assessment grades are used to check pupils' progress. Some subject reports include specific ways in which work can be improved. Parents are encouraged to discuss the report further if they wish. Pupils are encouraged to write an assessment of their work and progress, and many do this with considerable maturity. The reports in the EYFS are not sufficiently tailored to the individual child, nor do they provide enough guidance as to their next steps.

- 5.14 Parents also have opportunities for formal and informal parents' evenings and other occasional information evenings, for example on internet awareness. They are also encouraged to participate in careers conventions and help with interview practice in the sixth form. Prospective parents are encouraged to visit the school and taster sessions are arranged for new pupils. They are given all necessary information. The newsletters on the website are informative, celebrating the many achievements of pupils, as well as keeping parents informed about future events.

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