



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE ROYAL MASONIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Royal Masonic School for Girls

Full Name of School	<b>The Royal Masonic School for Girls</b>		
DfE Number	<b>919/6165</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY398298</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>276784</b>		
Address	<b>The Royal Masonic School for Girls Rickmansworth Park Chorleywood Road Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 4HF</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01923 773168</b>		
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Email Address	<b>enquiries@royalmasonic.herts.sch.uk</b>		
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Diana Rose</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr John Gould</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>880</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>25</b>	5-11: <b>218</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>57</b>	11-18: <b>580</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>735</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>10</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>145</b>	
	Full:	<b>111</b>	Weekly: <b>34</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Karen Woodhead</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed 2 to 4; girls 4 to 5</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>04 Oct 2011 to 05 Oct 2011</b>		
	<b>02 Nov 2011 to 04 Nov 2011</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 September 2005.

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 Education (DFE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, 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 June 2011 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under 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.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Royal Masonic School for Girls is a day and boarding school for girls aged two to eighteen and for boys aged two to four. It was founded in 1788 in south London and moved to its present site on a 200-acre estate to the north west of London in 1934. Founded originally as a Masonic institution to provide education for children who had been bereaved, or had some other type of disadvantage, it became a fee-paying school, open to girls of all backgrounds, in 1978 but continues to educate girls in need who are funded by The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys. There are currently 880 pupils on roll, including 82 aged 2 to 5 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and 145 boarders. The school is non-denominational and admits pupils of all faiths and of none. The headmistress, whose responsibility is for the whole school, has been in post since January 2002.
- 1.2 Since its previous inspection in 2005, the school has opened a Nursery for boys and girls aged two to four. It has reorganised the senior leadership team, as well as its boarding accommodation, and has refurbished one of its boarding houses. The school also opened a refurbished and expanded Pre-Prep and Prep Department known as Cadogan House in January 2011. The current chair of governors was appointed in October 2009 and is a trustee.
- 1.3 The school aims to inspire its pupils to strive for their personal best academically and in their wider creative and sporting pursuits, and to cultivate young women who are confident, compassionate, well balanced, emotionally intelligent and successful. It seeks to nurture each girl as an individual with limitless potential for success.
- 1.4 The ability profile of Cadogan House is above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. The ability profile of the Senior School is broadly above the average of maintained schools, but below that of selective maintained schools. The sixth form reflects the ability profile of the rest of the school.
- 1.5 The school has identified 135 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are 77 pupils who are learning English as an additional language (EAL), 38 of whom receive additional support.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

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

School	NC name
Pre-School	Nursery
Reception	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 The school has improved in a number of areas since the previous inspection. It is highly successful in meeting its aim to enable all pupils to develop to the full their academic, personal and creative potential. Pupils in both Cadogan House and the Senior School are highly successful in their achievement and personal development. Pupils make excellent progress in reaching high academic standards that are enhanced by lively and encouraging teaching. Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes are significant factors in their all-round success. They achieve highly in non-academic areas of school life, and the extremely wide choice of extra-curricular activities contributes significantly to their educational experience.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent and continues to be a major strength. Pupils are compassionate, tolerant and helpful to one another. Excellent pastoral care, welfare arrangements and health and safety procedures all underpin pupils' increasing maturity and self-reliance. Numerous opportunities for responsibility throughout the school allow pupils to contribute very positively to their community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in the school. They relish the challenges set in curricular and extra-curricular areas, and thrive on the expectations of them to succeed. Pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves manifests in their proactive approach to charity fund raising.
- 2.3 The governing body has a good oversight of all aspects of the school and, ensures that regulatory requirements are met. The school has responded extremely well to the recommendations from the previous report relating to greater investment in information and communication technology (ICT), and an improvement in library facilities. Leadership and management are excellent. The support given by the newly enlarged senior leadership team is much appreciated by the staff. Robust and extremely effective policies and procedures fully support pupils in their academic and personal development. Heads of department are diligent in their planning, and hard working and enthusiastic in promoting excellence in teaching and learning. Development planning is well co-ordinated between governors, senior staff and department heads. The school promotes excellent links with parents. In pre-inspection questionnaires, parents expressed a high level of satisfaction, especially with regard to the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views, and the range of extra-curricular activities. Some expressed concerns about a large amount of homework given to their children, and the provision of information about their children's progress. Inspectors' findings did not support these views. Pupils speak very highly of the school and feel extremely well supported.

## **2.(b) Action points**

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

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Extend the range of opportunities for parents to interact formally and informally with the governing body.
  2. Ensure that standards of marking in all departments in the Senior School match the excellent practice already found in some.



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

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

- 3.1 Pupils' overall achievement is excellent. The school is highly successful in meeting its aims of enabling pupils to fulfil their academic potential, and in developing their talents in a wide variety of areas. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are learning English as an additional language, achieve extremely well in many subject areas.
- 3.2 Pupils settle quickly when they join Cadogan House, and apply themselves wholeheartedly. Throughout the school, pupils develop exceptionally good knowledge, skills and understanding. They communicate fluently and coherently, both orally and in writing. Pupils with EAL participate fully in lessons, because of the excellent progress they make in developing their command of English. Pupils gain a firm grasp of mathematical, scientific and ICT skills, and a strong ability to think critically. Pupils demonstrate excellent creative and performing skills. The many examples of pupils' work in visual arts and textiles on display around the school, as well as their musical performances, are outstanding and spiritually uplifting.
- 3.3 Pupils throughout the school achieve considerable success in a very wide range of academic and non-academic areas, including a national design and technology competition. Many pupils perform successfully in music, speech and drama examinations. An increasing number gain The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) at silver and gold level. Sports teams achieve high levels of success locally and nationally in, for example, swimming and gymnastics.
- 3.4 The great majority of Year 11 pupils continue their studies in the sixth form. Without exception, pupils go on to higher education, many of them gaining places to study a range of disciplines at universities with demanding entrance requirements, and at specialist institutions for music, art and drama.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and eleven cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Results at both GCSE and A level have been far above the national average for girls in all maintained schools, and above average compared with those of girls in maintained selective schools. Pupils' performance at these levels has risen substantially in recent years and in 2011 the results of those in Years 11 and 13 were the best ever for the school, with a high proportion of grades at A\* or A. This level of attainment indicates that throughout the school, pupils make exceptional progress in relation to those of similar ability.
- 3.6 Pupils display extremely positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive to, and are prepared to learn from, one another, as well as their teachers. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, and, with their teachers' help, use these as opportunities to enhance their learning.

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

- 3.7 In both Cadogan House and the Senior School, the quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs, and fully accords with the school's aim of nurturing individuals and inspiring them to strive for their personal best, both academically and in wider creative and sporting pursuits.
- 3.8 Thoughtful planning across key stages of learning results in a smooth transition for pupils from Cadogan House to the Senior School. The curriculum in the Senior School is stimulating and balanced, and offers a particularly wide range of GCSE and A-level options. Accelerated courses make effective provision for the most able mathematicians and scientists whilst talented linguists can now study Mandarin and Italian. Astronomy and Latin are also available as additional GCSE subjects, outside the timetable, and the Extended Project Qualification has been introduced to help pupils to prepare for university study. Pupils benefit from excellent facilities for creative and expressive arts. Provision for the performing arts is particularly strong, with a large number of musical and drama productions and a long-standing choral tradition. Well-planned schemes of work and setting arrangements help to provide appropriate levels of challenge for all levels of ability. The enrichment programme provides additional stimulus for the most able; activities such as 'reach for the stars' further raise aspirations, whilst the numerous subject clinics allow pupils to receive extra support at lunchtimes and after school. The extensive range of educational visits, residential trips and the visiting speaker programme further enrich the curriculum.
- 3.9 The school's provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is outstanding. Screening is highly effective, and individual education plans and regular communication between subject teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator facilitate appropriate lesson planning. Specialist help is provided individually or in small groups at lunchtimes and after school. The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme is well planned, and enhances pupils' personal development throughout the school. Pupils are given effective guidance when selecting their GCSE and A-level options, and with their higher education applications. The programme of work experience for Year 11 and work shadowing for sixth formers is a key part of careers education. The curriculum is well supported by extensive ICT provision throughout the school and the library now provides comprehensive and up-to-date resources for learning.
- 3.10 The extensive range and high quality of extra-curricular activities, in both the Senior School and Cadogan House, provide pupils with an outstanding variety of opportunities, which they thoroughly enjoy. The numerous sporting, creative, cultural and intellectual activities are a great strength of the school and contribute strongly to pupils' personal development. Participation in the DofE scheme, Combined Cadet Force and the Model United Nations is high. Extensive charity work throughout the school and links with the community also make a significant contribution to pupils' development. Projects with schools in Africa help to increase pupils' awareness of the needs of communities in the developing world. Pupils perform in local care homes and hospitals, and also work locally with children with disabilities, further improving their appreciation of the challenges others face.

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

- 3.11 The quality of teaching is excellent, and is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress. Teaching at Cadogan House is well focused, lively and challenging. Throughout the school, teachers employ praise and encouragement to exceptionally good effect, adding to pupils' enjoyment of their work and supporting the aim of enabling each to be esteemed as an individual, capable of success.
- 3.12 Lessons are meticulously planned, and teachers make highly effective use of the very good resources available to them. Teachers are well qualified and have high levels of knowledge and expertise. Staff observe each other within and across departments, and, increasingly, share effective teaching methods.
- 3.13 The best lessons offer fast pace, enthusiasm, an imaginative variety of activities, and a willingness to challenge pupils and to build on their ideas. This enables pupils to take an active role in lessons and promotes independent learning. In a pre-GCSE lesson, pupils presented weather reports in Mandarin and in a psychology lesson, older pupils considered how leading questions could affect eye-witness accounts following a car crash. In all lessons, teachers create a well-disciplined atmosphere, which encourages effective learning. Pupils appreciate the unstinting support they receive from their teachers, who give freely of their time to assist groups and individuals through formal and informal sessions. Teachers pay excellent attention to the needs of individuals and, where necessary, tailor their demands accordingly. A highly effective system is in place to support pupils with SEND or EAL and the school provides a diverse programme of extension activities for the gifted and talented. Most teachers make good use of the school's enhanced ICT facilities, for example in mathematics where an 'elimination' game required some of the youngest Senior School pupils to identify three-dimensional solids from an increasing number of clues. Pupils and staff enjoy ample access to computers, and to the generous stock of books, CDs and DVDs, magazines, newspapers and periodicals.
- 3.14 The school's assessment policy encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils write targets for each subject at the beginning of each term and their teachers check their progress against these at the end of term. Marking of pupils' written work, at its best, is very thorough, diagnostic, formative and warmly encouraging but some is uneven in quality and quantity. The school is already addressing this issue in departmental reviews. Pupils, however, are confident that they understand their mistakes and know how to improve. They appreciate the verbal feedback provided by their teachers. The introduction of 'My Learning Programme' is enhancing teaching, as demonstrated in a lesson in which pupils discussed Macbeth's character in groups of four, with each member promoting one of the four Rs – reciprocity, resilience, resourcefulness and reflectiveness.
- 3.15 Pupils' performance and potential are regularly assessed using nationally standardised data, and the results are carefully monitored so that any underperformance can be quickly addressed. Target setting is given a high importance in stimulating pupils' effort and motivation.

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

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

- 4.1 The excellence of pupils' personal development demonstrates the school's achievement of its aim to provide a culture that celebrates personal success and values qualities such as courtesy, dignity and kindness. From their earliest years in the school, pupils are happy and secure and, over time, develop confidence in their many talents, responding thoughtfully to the world around them. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the vast number of opportunities on offer within the school and the wider context, and to use their initiative, be creative and develop responsibility in an environment with a strong sense of community.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They combine confidence and self-worth with respect and concern for others. Their contribution to the life of the school reflects a strong sense of identity and self-belief. During lessons, pupils become reflective learners who not only develop academic skills but also place learning in a wider context. Pupils express their insight into the wider world through high quality art, drama, music and gymnastics. The extensive PSHCE programme encourages pupils to explore moral, personal and social issues, and to recognise how individual values and beliefs can determine behaviour.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral awareness is outstanding. They show a clear understanding of right and wrong. Their behaviour around the school is excellent and shows sensitivity and care for one another. In lessons, pupils are co-operative and respectful, listening to the views of others and interacting with staff and peers in a relaxed yet purposeful fashion. This strength is built upon mutual trust and respect. The example is set by teachers, whose close collegiate sense creates a supportive atmosphere to which the pupils respond. Relationships are excellent, both amongst pupils, and between pupils and staff. In this positive atmosphere, pupils observe established, clear and effective boundaries. The generosity of pupils in supporting the diverse range of charitable events reflects the high level of moral awareness within the school.
- 4.4 Opportunities for responsibility throughout the school enhance pupils' excellent social development. Pupils respond positively to the encouragement they are given to contribute to community initiatives such as the Community Arts Programme, where they enjoy performing and providing entertainment for a variety of external audiences and charities. Older pupils act as role models for younger ones, offering support and guidance when required. Pupils are proud to be part of the school. Representing the school is seen as an honour, but its overarching ethos is the inclusive environment where all individuals are valued for their contribution and involvement in the breadth of activities on offer.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. The comprehensive programme of trips, visits, exchanges and visiting speakers builds pupils' appreciation of their own and other traditions and cultures. Pupils enjoy the opportunities created through links with overseas schools and to gain first-hand experience of the life of other communities. The outstanding contribution of the creative arts, drama and music adds depth to pupils' cultural experience. The cultural values of the school are reinforced in the PSHCE programme, through extra-curricular activities and by means of displays, posters and well-presented notice boards. Pupils leave the school as exceptionally well-informed and well-rounded young adults.

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

- 4.6 Throughout the school, the quality of arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent. The staff deliver highly effective support and guidance in accordance with the school's aim of providing a nurturing, inclusive and supportive environment. The staff know the pupils well and the quality of relationships throughout the school community is a noticeable strength. Excellent communication amongst staff ensures that the needs of individuals, including those with SEND or EAL, are comprehensively met. Pupils report that there are many sources of support for them if they have concerns. The 'worry box' provides an excellent means for Cadogan House pupils to voice their concerns in a private manner. Pastoral care is co-ordinated effectively between teaching, boarding and medical staff, and there are effective links with outside agencies so that further support can be provided where needed. Pupils value the role that older girls play as 'big sisters', and they also have access to the services of a counsellor. Careful arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition from Cadogan House to the Senior School. High expectations and a culture of respect for others promote good behaviour and a sense of personal responsibility so that courtesy and concern for others are the norm. Pupils reported in interviews that they do not feel bullying is a concern in the school, and that they are confident that the school would deal rapidly and effectively if it did arise. The school promotes the safe use of the internet and is vigilant about the risks of cyber-bullying. It implements clear and supportive policies for dealing with any instances of unacceptable behaviour so that, for instance, more minor issues are prevented from escalating.
- 4.7 The school's arrangements for safeguarding children and young people are robust and fully conform with regulatory requirements; procedures for the appointment of staff are thorough and effective. Staff follow a regular programme of child protection training, including enhanced training for those with designated responsibilities.
- 4.8 Appropriate arrangements are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Risk assessments are comprehensive and regularly reviewed; areas of higher risk are identified and carefully monitored. Attendance registers are suitably maintained and carefully stored. Provision for the care of pupils, including boarders, who are sick or injured is of a high quality. The health centre provides a welcoming environment and offers a comprehensive range of services for boarders, including access to dental and optician checks on site.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle through a wide range of opportunities to take regular exercise. Healthy eating is promoted through PSHCE and the wider curriculum, and the school provides a nutritious and extensive choice of food.

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

- 4.10 The school's boarding provision was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2011. Boarders benefit from the warm family atmosphere which prevails across the school. Relationships between the different age groups, and between pupils who belong to the different traditions that are represented in the school, are excellent, and staff are both supportive and encouraging. There is extremely good communication between boarding staff and pupils' form tutors, who have oversight of their academic and pastoral development.
- 4.11 The programme of activities for boarders is appropriate to their ages and offers a good range of opportunities in the evening and at weekends. Pupils are fully involved in making suggestions to enhance the programme. They greatly appreciate and are keen to praise their experience of boarding life, including the quality of the accommodation and the resources that are available to them, especially in the newly refurbished boarding house.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good. Governors have an extensive and increasingly wide range of experience and skills. There is a clear policy for the recruitment and induction of new members, including comprehensive guidance on their role, and clear terms of reference for the board's committees.
- 5.2 The governing body has a clear view of the school's aims and strengths, has accurately identified issues for future development and is well aware of its legal obligations. The governors have well-developed systems for reviewing and managing risks to the school. The recent review and reorganisation of the committee structure have facilitated the development of a clearer, more targeted approach to monitoring and evaluating the school's development plans, its policies and its compliance with regulatory requirements. The formation of an academic committee has been particularly welcomed by staff. A working party on governance and management is continuing to review the effectiveness of new arrangements and a long-term strategic plan is approaching completion.
- 5.3 There is regular contact between the chair of governors and the headmistress, who values this support and the contribution made by other members of the board. Governors have made it a priority to increase their contact with staff and have created opportunities to meet them on an informal basis, as well as through formal meetings. Heads of department regularly make presentations to the academic committee. Links between governors and staff have also been developed by governors spending time in school observing lessons and shadowing pupils. Governors regularly attend school events and celebrations, which enhances their knowledge of the school and gives them the opportunity to interact with pupils and parents. They have, however, identified desirability in making themselves more visible to parents and view this as a key priority.

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

- 5.4 Strong and decisive leadership and highly effective management throughout the school make an excellent contribution to its success in achieving its aims. Leaders at all levels show an exceptional commitment to raising pupils' achievement and to promoting all aspects of their personal development and well-being, with a particularly strong focus on recognising and developing individual pupils' strengths and talents.
- 5.5 Since the previous inspection, management responsibilities have been substantially reorganised. This has resulted in clearer lines of accountability and an enhanced ability to monitor effectively all aspects of the school's performance. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous in its identification of strengths and areas for further development. Regular and well-focused observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, carried out by middle as well as senior leaders, have led to a higher proportion of outstanding teaching, and consequently to raising pupils' levels of achievement.
- 5.6 Senior leaders, with the support of the governing body, have developed comprehensive policies and effective procedures to ensure that the school operates smoothly and meets its pupils' needs. Middle leaders, including heads of academic

departments, show high levels of expertise in, and enthusiasm for, the areas for which they are responsible. Pastoral care is sensitively and effectively managed.

- 5.7 Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection with regard to the use of ICT and library provision. The enlarged and restructured senior leadership team ensures that developmental planning is well focused on making effective and efficient use of the school's available resources. Recent refurbishments of Cadogan House and the upgraded boarding provision, as well as substantial investment in ICT facilities, have resulted in an improved environment for learning and development.
- 5.8 Well-qualified and appropriately experienced staff fully support the school's ethos, including its focus on enabling all individuals to fulfil their potential. Teachers are very keen to take every opportunity to improve their practice. Secretarial, administrative and other non-teaching staff provide effective support for both staff and pupils.

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

- 5.9 Links with parents are excellent. Parents are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children, the values promoted and the quality of communication with the school. Those parents who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of most aspects of the school's work. Some expressed concerns about the information provided about their children's progress. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view. Systems for communicating with the parents of pupils with SEND or EAL, and with those who live or work abroad, are highly effective.
- 5.10 The school website is an excellent tool which is fully utilised to communicate school news and information to parents of current and prospective pupils. Communication with parents has been enhanced by the introduction of the parents' portal. This provides a list of all current school documents, and a weekly newsletter with articles and information about Friends of the Royal Masonic School (FORMS) events and about community courses, some of which are run by parents, such as Indian cookery. The FORMS group also organises regular fund-raising activities for the school. By means of the portal, parents can also access their children's timetable, examination results and reports, past and present, and can communicate with all their teachers by email. The school makes excellent use of email, encouraging parents to make immediate contact to discuss any concerns with tutors, subject specialists or senior staff. A weekly surgery is held by an assistant head, for parents with concerns. Complaints are rare, and are handled appropriately when they do occur.
- 5.11 Parents have excellent opportunities to take part in a variety of events, including class assemblies in Cadogan House, evenings for those parents new to the school and ICT safety days, and many of them attend the numerous concerts, plays and sporting events. Parents receive frequent, clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress, and the full reports provide helpful targets to indicate how further progress and higher levels of attainment can be achieved.

**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 setting successfully provides a stimulating, happy and caring environment where all children are encouraged to reach their full potential. Good support is provided to children who have EAL, and tasks at a more demanding level appropriately challenge the most able. Good and excellent teaching by class teachers and subject specialists in a nurturing environment ensures that all children achieve well. Children make a very good start to their education because teachers and other staff know them well. Self-evaluation is effective, and demonstrates a clear vision for future development and good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding overall. Staff successfully implement policies that promote equality and eliminate discrimination. They establish excellent relationships with parents, and in the pre-inspection questionnaire and discussions during the inspection, parents indicated that they value the work of the school. Good communication with parents is achieved through informal daily contact, parents' evenings, regular newsletters and invitations to become involved in the life of the school. Staff promote children's well-being effectively and safeguarding arrangements are robust.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding overall. The Nursery facilities and resources are very well organised, the setting is bright and welcoming, and children have easy access to a stimulating outside learning environment. Classrooms are well equipped and provide access to a computer. The school provides a safe environment. The staff's close co-operation with parents helps to ensure that children are cared for very well. Teachers manage children's behaviour sensitively, offer positive support and reinforcement, and provide a warm and secure emotional environment. Staff motivate children with well-chosen activities, and in their planning take good account of the needs of individuals. Recording and ongoing assessment are thorough.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children are outstanding overall. Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals, with many working consistently beyond them. By the end of the Reception year, many reach high standards in all areas of learning with many exceeding age-related expectations. Children are articulate and listen attentively. Children in the Nursery can accurately match counters to numbers up to ten, and can link letters of the alphabet to sounds. They have good pencil control and can confidently write the 'letter of the week'. Children in Reception develop independent writing skills and understand, for example, that sentences begin with a capital letter. They can recognise plus and minus signs and are confident when finding one more or one less. Children are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for putting equipment away. They care for one another and show kindness and respect. They know how to keep safe. Children wash their hands regularly throughout the day and know how to make healthy choices about what to eat and drink.

#### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

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

**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 and another governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Robin Gaff	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Elizabeth Laybourn	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Graham Reeder	Former Deputy Head, IAPS/ISA school
Mrs Judith Scotcher	Former Head, GSA school
Mrs Jean Smith	Former Director of Studies, GSA school
Mrs Elizabeth Thomas	Head, GSA/SHMIS school
Dr John Wharam	Director of Teaching and Learning, HMC school
Miss Mary Regan	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector