



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Stockport Grammar School

The junior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Stockport Grammar School</b>
DfE Number	<b>356/6018</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1120199</b>
Address	<b>Stockport Grammar School Buxton Road Stockport Cheshire SK2 7AF</b>
Telephone Number	<b>0161 456 9000</b>
Fax Number	<b>0161 419 2407</b>
Email Address	<b>sgs@stockportgrammar.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mr Andrew Chicken</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Richard L E Rimmington</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>1038</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (580 boys; 458 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	11-18: <b>1038</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>1038</b>
Inspection dates	<b>01 Feb 2011 to 02 Feb 2011</b> <b>02 Mar 2011 to 04 Mar 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 April 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.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The quality of governance	9
(b) The quality of leadership and management	9
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1487, Stockport Grammar School is a selective co-educational day school. Originally a school for boys, it moved to its current site in 1916 and became co-educational in 1980, since when it has grown considerably in size. It is situated to the south of Stockport and draws the majority of its pupils from a wide range of backgrounds from the southern and eastern suburbs of Greater Manchester and North Cheshire. The school aims to provide a caring and friendly community where pupils will be equipped with high moral values, personal qualities and a thirst for knowledge which will help them to achieve academic excellence and to become worthwhile and responsible members of society, able to think for themselves and respect other people.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. Since the last inspection in April 2005, a new head has been appointed and facilities have been extended to include a new library and physics laboratories. At the time of the inspection, there were 1038 pupils on roll in the senior school. There are 794 pupils in Years 7 to 11 with 446 boys and 348 girls. The sixth form caters for 244 pupils with 135 boys and 109 girls. The school shares its site with a junior school of 365 pupils which provides about forty per cent of the intake into the senior school, with almost all members of Year 6 moving into Year 7. The school community is socially and culturally diverse with many of the major world religions represented in the school population.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the school from Years 7 to 11 is above the national average. The ability profile in the sixth form is also above the national average but with a wider range of ability than in Years 7 to 11. Very few pupils leave after GCSE and the majority of Year 13 pupils go to their first choice of university. The school has identified 34 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) all of whom have learning support, and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language (EAL) but no extra support is required.
- 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 tables.

### ***Senior School***

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 7
Form 2	Year 8
Form 3	Year 9
Form 4	Year 10
Form 5	Year 11
Form 6	Year 12
Form 7	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 The overall achievements of the pupils are excellent. The pupils are well educated and the school meets its aim to enable boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds to realise their potential. The progress of pupils, including those with LDD or SEN, is above average for pupils of similar ability. Results at GCSE and A level are good and often excellent for the ability of the pupils. The curriculum of the school is broad with some excellent features, and pupils have exceptional achievement in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and music. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. At all stages they work hard, have high aspirations, are co-operative and maintain excellent relationships with their teachers. Teaching is effective overall, but in some lessons pupils' work is too directed and exam-focused, resulting in a lack of opportunities for collaborative work with their peers or for independent study.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is outstanding. They demonstrate excellent moral, social and cultural development and have a clear set of values and principles which inform their positive perspective on life. They have well developed personalities for their age and are comfortable with who they are and their place in the community. The life studies programme and the wider opportunities provided in the curriculum combined with the excellent pastoral care make a significant impact on the personal development of the pupils. Suitable procedures and policies are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Health and safety measures are carefully adhered to.
- 2.3 The governors provide excellent oversight of all aspects of the education and they discharge their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment for the future. They take child protection matters and the welfare, health and safety of the pupils seriously. All the recommendations of the previous inspection regarding improved oversight of the extra-curricular provision, improved development planning and a more consistent approach to marking have been completed successfully. The head and senior leadership team provide excellent leadership and management but information and communication technology (ICT) is not used imaginatively in the classroom. The school maintains excellent links with parents. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents agree that the school promotes good educational progress, high standards of behaviour, worthwhile attitudes and a good curriculum and maintains good communication with them. A small number of parents raised a concern about the provision of worthwhile help for pupils with special needs. The inspection team found that the provision for specialist help for LDD and SEN pupils outside the classroom is good. Some concerns were raised by a small number of pupils in their questionnaire responses regarding whether the school listens to pupils' views and responds to them and whether pupils are treated equally but the inspection team found no evidence to support these concerns.

## **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. Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative in learning through greater use of independent and collaborative work in the classroom.
  2. Make more imaginative use of ICT in the classroom to benefit pupils' learning.

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

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

- 3.1 The pupils' overall achievement and their learning, attitudes and skills are outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well educated and the school fulfils its aim to enable boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds to realise their potential which gives them the best possible start in life. Pupils have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Good standards of literacy, numeracy, and other core skills are evident in lessons and in written work. The presentation and organisation of their work is of a high quality and shows commitment to detail in the volume produced. The pupils are articulate and confident communicators, both as speakers and listeners, when debating topics in lessons such as a discussion on medieval life in history. Levels of numeracy and scientific knowledge are high with notable success in regional and national mathematics challenges, and mathematics and science Olympiads. They show a competent range of skills in ICT lessons and they can think logically and reason effectively, as seen in a classics lesson where pupils reflected on Homer's *Odyssey*. Pupils think creatively when given the opportunity and exceptional skill is seen in creative subjects, as demonstrated by the excellent design and technology models and the high standard of art and textiles displayed around the school. Musical skills are inspiring and strong results are achieved in national examinations in music and drama. Pupils gain national and county honours in many sports represented in the school. Notable achievement is seen each year in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (D of E) scheme and Young Enterprise.
- 3.2 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Performance at IGCSE since 2008 has been above international norms and broadly similar to UK norms where the benchmark is higher. Results at A level have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools and good in relation to the national average for maintained selective schools. These levels of attainment indicate that pupils of all ages make good and often exceptional progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measure of progress. This level of progress is confirmed by the work seen, in the lessons observed and in discussions with pupils. Pupils with LDD and SEN make similar progress to all other pupils in the school.
- 3.3 Pupils have a strong work ethic, and are ambitious for themselves. They are positive and enthusiastic in lessons. They take pride in their work and are keen to improve their levels of attainment, readily asking questions to improve their understanding. The relationship between pupils and teachers is excellent and reflects the caring ethos of the school, which helps to promote their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' successful achievement is due to their hard work and perseverance, and the good quality of teaching. However, they have little opportunity to use their own initiative in learning through working collaboratively because of the style of teaching in some lessons.



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

- 3.4 The curriculum is good throughout the school and the extra-curricular provision is excellent, giving pupils the opportunity to achieve their academic potential and develop their skills to lead fulfilling lives in accordance with the school aims. The broad curriculum supports pupils' progress and achievement well, and the extra-curricular programme makes an extremely strong contribution to their personal development.
- 3.5 A curriculum committee has been established following the previous inspection to keep the curriculum under review. A new timetable structure has been designed and implemented and new subjects have been introduced to broaden the choice for pupils' interests, such as ICT as a GCSE subject and the study of physical education and Spanish to A level. The review of the curriculum led to the school teaching day being altered in format and length in order to increase the teaching time available and this has helped to raise achievement. The school has successfully fulfilled the recommendation of the last inspection report by providing co-ordinated oversight of provision of extra-curricular activities and participation throughout the school.
- 3.6 The curriculum is effective in covering all the different areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. The subjects of the National Curriculum are well represented and there is a good range of GCSE, IGCSE and A-level courses available. An excellent life studies programme covers all aspects of personal, social and health education (PSHE) with due attention to topics on citizenship and healthy living. Good provision is made from specialist teachers for pupils with specific learning needs associated with LDD or SEN although provision in some subject lessons is less consistent. Careers education is thorough, especially for the older pupils preparing for university and the world of work. A start has been made for an increased provision of extension work for the more gifted and talented pupils, such as the 'Colour Chemistry' project with Leeds University, but the approach is not consistent across all departments.
- 3.7 The provision for extra-curricular involvement is outstanding. There is a broad selection of opportunities available to the pupils and in these activities good extension work can be seen. The D of E scheme is very successful, with a quarter of all pupils working to silver or gold award and providing opportunities for pupils to be engaged in community service. Music is an important and highly valued part of the curriculum and there are many opportunities to be involved in choirs, bands and orchestras. Pupils enjoy drama and they mentioned that a recent production of *Les Miserables* was "inspirational." All pupils have access to a good range of sporting activities to suit their interests and provide effective opportunities for exercise. Clubs and societies stimulate creativity, such as the animation club, and offer opportunities to be competitive as in the chess and tactical games clubs. The curriculum is enhanced by experiences outside the classroom on the many trips into the local community and further afield. A work experience programme involves the majority of pupils in Year 11 and the Model United Nations allows interaction with pupils from several local and international schools. Trips abroad are frequent and enable pupils to broaden their experience. Recent examples include a language exchange to Germany, a cricket trip to Australia and cultural trips to Italy and Greece.

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

- 3.8 The quality of teaching is good and is effective in promoting pupils' progress. The school achieves its aim to contribute towards pupils' success in life beyond school and university by equipping them with a thirst for knowledge, and to achieve academic excellence which will serve them all of their lives. The sharing of good practice within the classroom is taking place as recommended in the previous inspection and a greater consistency of good quality teaching across the school has been achieved.
- 3.9 The most outstanding lessons observed were those that engaged interactively with the pupils, were lively and well-paced in the transfer of information, and used a variety of methods and resources in a creative way, resulting in excellent pupil behaviour due to sustained interest and challenge. Pupils enjoyed lessons which allowed them to take the initiative in the use of their own knowledge and skills, as seen in a music lesson when pupils' musicality was well used to clarify the information. Pupils' imagination is stimulated in lessons which use a variety of resources, as demonstrated in a very lively English lesson. In the less successful lessons, the teaching does not inspire or engage the pupils. Too much directed teaching with an emphasis on note-taking fails to allow pupils to explore information for themselves or with their peers. In these lessons, little opportunity was observed for pupils to work in pairs or groups in the classroom. The lessons for older pupils often have too much focus on examination technique to the detriment of independent learning.
- 3.10 Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. The planning of lessons is thorough in subject content but it is not always tailored to pupils' individual needs. Teaching for pupils with LDD and SEN is good but more personalised work and attention is not always provided. Individual needs are best catered for in the practical lessons, as seen in a physical education lesson where all abilities could shine in the planned activities. There is a lack of extension work in some lessons for the more able pupils but, when independent learning is encouraged, outstanding work is produced, as evidenced in history projects and physics coursework.
- 3.11 Resources for teaching are good but teaching does not always make the best use of them. Interviews with pupils and scrutiny of their work indicate that the use of ICT is under-utilised as an imaginative resource for learning in the classroom. Interactive whiteboards are rarely used interactively and are mostly used as a resource for digital projection. The library is an excellent resource that is well used by both pupils and teachers for study and research, and library staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- 3.12 As recommended in the previous inspection, the school has established a more consistent approach to marking, and departmental marking policies have been established. Marking is good overall. The use of data to track progress is beginning to show results in raising achievement, but it is not yet fully embedded in all subject areas to ensure that all pupils are making sufficient progress.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. It fulfils the school's aims to contribute to pupils' success in life beyond school and university by equipping them with high moral values and personal qualities which will serve them all of their lives and enable them to become worthwhile and responsible citizens.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is good. They have well-developed personalities for their age and are comfortable with who they are and with their place in the school community. Pupils take advantage of opportunities to explore and enjoy their talents, raising their self-esteem, and exhibit a good degree of personal insight which is evident when working with their form tutors. They listen carefully and enjoy assemblies that are spiritual and moral in content. Many religions are represented in the school and pupils share in Muslim, Hindu and Jewish assemblies as well as Christian. This allows pupils to reflect on traditions different from their own. Pupils demonstrate a clear set of values and principles which inform their very positive perspective on life.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is outstanding. The school espouses strong moral values which permeate its ethos and activities and pupils respond to them. Prejudice and discrimination are absent from the school community as pupils ensure that respect for others and the integrity of the community are some of the core values prevailing in daily life. Pupils are able to distinguish between right and wrong, and understand and appreciate the need for rewards and sanctions which, in discussion with pupils, were seen to be consistent and fair. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of pupils felt that teachers did not always treat pupils equally, but when interviewed pupils did not indicate that this was a problem.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is extremely strong. They exhibit care and consideration for others and maintain excellent relationships between themselves and with their teachers, which are characterised by good humour and respectful interaction. They contribute to the life of the school community through active involvement in the well-established house system and competitions. A good example of this is the organisation of the yearly inter-house talent show. They make their views heard through electing others or serving as representatives on the school council. Pupils show responsibility around school and are supportive of each other, carrying out their duties sensitively. Year 7 pupils are supported through a 'First Form Friends' system and sixth-formers help younger pupils through sports coaching. There is a well-established prefect and house captain structure and both groups of senior pupils provide excellent role models for younger pupils.
- 4.5 The cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. There is a good multicultural mix in the school and pupils' everyday interaction is enhanced by their involvement in a varied and interesting life studies programme. In this, pupils not only learn about citizenship and UK institutions, but also understand and celebrate different cultures and have opportunities for discussion of current world affairs and moral issues. They develop their awareness of other cultures through involvement in charity work. This has led pupils to develop international links in India and Sierra Leone and substantial sums have been raised for national and international charities. Pupils further develop their knowledge of the world through their involvement in the Model United Nations scheme.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the quality of their pastoral care throughout the school are excellent and result in a caring and friendly community where pupils feel highly valued. The contribution of these arrangements to pupils' personal development is outstanding.
- 4.7 Pastoral arrangements are clearly understood. The combination of support provided through the tutors, heads of year, heads of section and the house system works well and results in concerns being identified and handled quickly. Pupils feel comfortable to talk to any member of staff of their choice if they have a problem to be resolved. Senior pupils also take responsibility for the welfare of others through a peer mentoring scheme which aims to match more mature pupils as role models for younger pupils experiencing difficulty, and senior prefects advise senior management members on a weekly basis. Communication amongst staff is very effective and is fully co-ordinated. There are regular meetings to ensure continuity of care. Minutes of meetings are logged on the computerised management system to allow pupils' welfare to be carefully monitored. Parents are kept well informed of any concerns regarding their children.
- 4.8 There are good policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the pupils including a detailed anti-bullying policy, and all staff and governors have had recent training in child protection. Overall patterns of behaviour are tracked and any serious issues are dealt with by an experienced member of the senior management team, who together communicate well to safeguard and discipline pupils effectively. Behaviour policies are known and adhered to and promote excellent behaviour throughout the school. Bullying is not tolerated and pupils recognise that the few instances that do occur are resolved swiftly. A concern was raised in the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaires regarding whether the school listens to pupils' views but, after discussion with the pupils, there was little evidence to suggest that the concern was justified. Pupils say they really like their school. The vast majority of pupils say that teachers show concern for them as individuals and they feel safe and secure. Relationships between pupils and staff and between the pupils themselves are positive.
- 4.9 Detailed risk assessments are undertaken and are regularly reviewed. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken and the required fire prevention procedures are suitable. The school has an appropriate three-year disability plan in operation and access to buildings and toilets for the disabled is good. There is an effective healthy living programme promoted through the curriculum and the pupils have good access to grounds and facilities for exercise and sporting activities. The school has an excellent dining facility for eating lunch and a breakfast club is available. A nutritious choice of food is available to suit all tastes. The medical room is satisfactorily equipped and the school has the required number of staff trained in first aid. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The governing body provides excellent oversight of the school in line with its aims and discharges well its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment for the school's future. The governors are drawn primarily from the local area and bring a wide range of expertise to the school, including direct knowledge of business, finance and leading and managing schools. They are very committed, and have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and the areas which would benefit from development. The governors have responded thoroughly to all the recommendations of the previous inspection by establishing well-structured committees overseeing all areas of school provision including education, curriculum and ICT committees.
- 5.2 Governors provide excellent support for the head and leadership team. They keep themselves well informed about the school through regular visits, both formal and informal, and are now venturing into the classrooms to experience the lessons first-hand. They encourage feedback from parents through questionnaires and invite staff members to meetings to discuss current educational practice. Careful minutes are kept of all meetings, showing a good range of discussion of issues across the whole school. School development planning is thorough and policies are reviewed regularly. The governing body is effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety and there is a nominated governor for child protection who oversees governor training in such matters.
- 5.3 Governors are involved in the appointment of key staff and a nominated governor oversees compliance with safer recruitment regulations. The governors have their own appraisal process and this has resulted in more focused training needs for the governors being identified. They are currently reviewing a new appraisal procedure for the head.

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

- 5.4 Through good, and often excellent, leadership and management the school is providing a high quality of education in accordance with its aims. The head, senior leadership team and governors are successful in sharing and promoting the vision for the future of the school and have responded very thoroughly to the recommendations of the previous inspection. New leadership roles have been established to focus on teaching and learning in the classroom and to review and oversee the curriculum and extra-curricular provision. School development planning is detailed, with priorities clearly identified, and departmental planning is well defined with measurable objectives. A more consistent approach to marking has been developed. The success of these improvements is reflected in the higher levels of achievement and personal development of the pupils.
- 5.5 The leadership provided by the head and his senior leadership team is excellent. Many educational initiatives have been introduced since the previous inspection and other identified areas for development, such as a more focused programme for the gifted and talented pupils, are being implemented, but have yet to be fully embedded into the working practice of the school. Senior leaders have identified well the needs of the school through effective self-evaluation and widespread consultation. The school's parental questionnaires have highlighted areas for development and many

suggestions have been acted upon. Systematic monitoring of departments by senior management is carefully undertaken. Self-evaluations by some heads of department, however, are less effective in identifying weaknesses in their subject areas relating to teaching and learning.

- 5.6 Communication is good throughout the school; meetings of all levels of management are frequent and good minutes are kept. Policies are clear and applied appropriately. Close attention has been given to areas of safeguarding and welfare, health and safety, in which all staff have been trained. Good systems are in place for recruiting high quality staff who are dedicated to the welfare and academic success of the pupils and who give generously of their time in extra-curricular programmes. Training is plentiful, although it continues to be dominated by subject demands rather than whole-school objectives linked to aspects of the school development plan, which does not currently improve classroom practice. Support staff make an important contribution to the pupils' personal and academic development through their roles in the school. A robust system of appraisal has been introduced and is linked to development planning. Safe recruitment procedures ensure that all the required checks on prospective employees are made, and they are correctly entered on the central register.

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

- 5.7 Links between the school and parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that the majority of parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children. Almost all parents agree that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and high standards of behaviour, provides an appropriate curriculum and maintains good communication with them. Inspection evidence supports these views. The senior leadership team previously identified a need to build a culture of responsiveness to parents in their school development planning, and the questionnaire shows that they have been very successful in this. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of parents raised a concern about the provision of worthwhile help for pupils with special needs. The inspection team found that the provision for specialist help for pupils with LDD or SEN outside the classroom is good.
- 5.8 The required information about the school and its policies are readily available for parents of pupils and prospective pupils. An excellent external relations department is responsible for the day to day publication of printed materials. They produce high quality and informative publications, such as the prospectus and general information booklets. An annual magazine, *The Stopfordian*, acknowledges the many and varied activities of the school year and the regular newsletter *Taking Stock* is supplemented by a two weekly email bulletin with news and current events. The website is excellent and updated daily, and it allows for all publications to be downloaded as required.
- 5.9 Parents are fully informed about the educational progress of their children through good quality reports issued at least once a year and backed up by half-termly effort grades. Reports indicate the standards achieved and areas requiring improvement. Teachers meet with parents once a year and on other evenings as arranged when extra information is required. Parents are encouraged to come into school to discuss issues regarding their children at other times.
- 5.10 The school's complaints policy meets requirements; it is available to parents and procedures are clear. General email and voice mail contact with the senior

leadership team and staff ensures that parental concerns can be highlighted easily and handled quickly. Parents are very welcome in school and have frequent invitations to support events such as concerts, plays and school matches. The parents, pupils, staff and governors work together for the benefit of the pupils through the Stopfordian Parents Association, which encourages parents to be more involved in the life of the school.

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the 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**

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Margaret Burnet Ward	Head, HMC school
Miss Katherine Haynes	Head, HMC school
Mr Robin Humphreys-Jones	Head of Department, HMC school
Mr John Moreland	Head, ISA school
Mr Martin Reader	Headmaster, HMC school