



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE GRANGE SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Grange School

Full Name of School	The Grange School		
DfE Number	896/6005		
Registered Charity Number	525918		
Address	The Grange School Bradburns Lane Hartford Northwich Cheshire CW8 1LU		
Telephone Number	01606 74007		
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Email Address	office@grange.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Christopher Jeffery		
Chair of Governors	Mr Gary Halman		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	1172		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (621 boys; 551 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 388
	3-5 (EYFS):	54	11-18: 730
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	1172	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mr Stephen Bennett		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	07 December 2010 to 08 December 2010 17 January 2011 to 19 January 2011		

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 from 27 February to 3 March 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

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

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 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, 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 Grange School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged four to eighteen. The original preparatory school was founded in 1933 and the senior school in 1978. The schools are in a semi-rural location in Cheshire, in the village of Hartford. The senior school is situated in the grounds of the original preparatory school that moved to purpose-built accommodation, less than half a mile away, in 1995 and is now known as the junior school. The school is governed by a governing board and is a registered charity. It is committed to encouraging and enabling all pupils to achieve their academic best. The school seeks to provide opportunities for pupils to develop and discover talents beyond the curriculum. It encourages pupils to respect and be sensitive to the needs of others and to explore their place in the world. Since the last inspection, new buildings and facilities have been completed at both schools.
- 1.2 The number of children on roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, Reception, is 54. There are 388 pupils in Years 1 to 6, 535 pupils in Years 7 to 11 and 195 pupils in Years 12 and 13. Entry to the school is by selective assessment, usually at the ages of four and eleven. Approximately seven out of ten pupils entering Year 7 come from the junior school. A number of pupils enter at sixth-form level. The ability profile of most pupils in the junior and senior schools is far above the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average. The school has identified 154 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 151 pupils receive learning support. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Thirty-three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.3 Pupils come primarily, but not exclusively, from professional and business families. They travel up to 25 miles to the school from a wide area of the county but the majority live in mid-Cheshire. Most pupils are of white British heritage, reflecting the school's catchment. A small number leave at the end of Year 11. Almost all leavers go on to higher education, most at the end of Year 13 and the remainder after a Gap Year.

- 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.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Reception

Junior School

School	NC name
Prep 1	Year 1
Prep 2	Year 2
Prep 3	Year 3
Prep 4	Year 4
Prep 5	Year 5
Prep 6	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
First Form	Year 7
Second Form	Year 8
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement and their learning, skills and attitudes are excellent. All pupils make exceptional progress. They reach high levels of attainment in the classroom and in the wide-ranging extra-curricular activities. Pupils have well-developed numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The focused and enthusiastic teaching is excellent overall. Marking and assessment are mostly highly effective. Pupils' achievement is supported by their excellent attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour, and the very positive relationships they enjoy amongst themselves and with staff. They are hard working and enthusiastic.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent and is supported by highly effective pastoral care and welfare arrangements. They are respectful and happy, and contribute positively to the school community. Pupils rise to the challenges and high expectations in all areas. Their care for one another, often across age groups, is evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and an awareness of the world beyond their own. They appreciate the spiritual dimension of life, often through music and art. They are sensitive to the beliefs and values of others. Their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves is demonstrated through their ready involvement in community projects. Robust safeguarding and health and safety procedures and policies underpin the pupils' development.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is excellent. The aims of the school are fully met. Governors have a sound oversight of the whole school and are forward looking. Recent new appointments and the establishment of new committees underline the governing body's awareness of its responsibilities. Comprehensive policies and risk assessments are effectively implemented. Governors demonstrate skilful financial management. The governors and the senior managers have addressed fully the recommendations from the last report. Staff recruitment procedures are rigorous. The school meets all the statutory regulations. Leadership and management are excellent in all parts of the school. Senior managers are dynamic and effective. Robust policies are implemented effectively. The roles of senior and middle management are clearly defined and rigorous systems ensure highly effective monitoring of academic and pastoral matters. An ongoing process of consultation, review and self-evaluation ensures continual improvement in the provision for the pupils. Liaison between the junior and senior school is good but the sharing of good practice and expertise between the two parts of the school is less developed. The school has excellent links with parents, whose replies in the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly favourable.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school 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. Formalise opportunities to share between the two parts of the school the outstanding practice and expertise that exist in each, for the benefit of staff and pupils.
 2. Extend the excellent initiative in the Early Years Foundation Stage of valuing parents as children's first educators, by offering them workshops linked to the six areas of 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 quality of the pupils' achievements, learning, attitudes and skills throughout the school is excellent. Their high level of success reflects the school's declared aims. From an early age they think for themselves, reason well, and demonstrate competent, transferable numeracy and literacy skills. Pupils' creativity is evident in their art, music, drama and application of well-developed ICT skills. They have excellent reading skills and are orally competent and articulate. All pupils with LDD or EAL achieve highly in relation to their abilities, and gifted and talented pupils are offered extra challenges. Pupils achieve high levels of performance in physical activity. They excel in extra-curricular activities. Exceptionally high numbers of pupils achieve excellent results in music, drama and speech examinations. In team and individual activities, pupils are very successful. A senior school team reached the finals of a national mathematics challenge and a junior school team was runner-up in the Royal Mail letter writing competition. A number of pupils are in national development or excellence squads for sport, with a number competing at national level. Almost all pupils go on to higher education, many gaining places at highly competitive universities.
- 3.2 Results in standardised tests at the ages of seven and eleven, last taken in 2007 to 2008, were far above the average for maintained primary schools. Junior school pupils' results in standardised tests in mathematics and reading are higher than national norms. GCSE results have been excellent in comparison with the national average for maintained schools. GCSE results in 2010 were the best ever for the school. Almost two-thirds of the grades achieved were A* and all pupils achieved five or more passes at grade C or above. Results at International GCSE (IGCSE) were excellent when compared with the average for schools worldwide and above the average for United Kingdom schools. At A level, results were also excellent: far above the average of those for all maintained schools, but also higher than the average for maintained selective schools. At A level in 2010, well over three-quarters of the grades were A* to B, with almost a quarter the new A* grade. These results at GCSE and A level, interpreted in the light of inspection evidence of a high proportion of lessons where achievement and learning were judged to be excellent, indicate that pupils make exceptionally good progress when compared with others of far above average ability. The ability of pupils on entry to the senior school is high but measurement of value-added data using national norms shows that pupils, on average, gain about two-thirds of a grade higher than predicted for each subject at both GCSE and A level. This progress was also seen in a high proportion of lessons judged to be excellent.
- 3.3 The pupils' successful achievement is strongly supported by their excellent attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour and their very positive relationships with staff. They work with enjoyment, support each other and have confidence in their teachers. They are highly productive working individually or co-operatively. They show curiosity and independence of mind, and are ready to discuss and share views. They are relaxed and confident, are unafraid to make mistakes and are ready to take part. They are well motivated and show a commitment to their studies and activities.

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

- 3.4 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. Both the junior and senior schools offer a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum that supports the aim to provide pupils with a wide range of stimulating opportunities and the encouragement to develop and discover interests and talents beyond the academic curriculum, to keep fit and healthy, and to play a full part in the life of the school. The school provides a rich learning experience for all its pupils, which facilitates high levels of achievement inside and outside the classroom. The curriculum throughout the school includes a well-designed personal and social education (PSE) programme. In line with the recommendations from the last inspection report, the junior school now has excellent ICT resources that are integrated into the curriculum and used extensively. The art curriculum in Years 7 to 9, in response to the last inspection report, gives pupils more opportunity to develop their hands-on experience of materials. The Year 7 curriculum is enriched through the study of logic and food technology, which is continued in Year 8. Expressive subjects are well represented and pupils have many creative opportunities. Pupils select from a wide, flexible range of subjects for GCSE, IGSCE and A level, allowing them to make personal choices. Through the Enrichment Programme and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), sixth-form pupils have a wealth of opportunities to help them prepare for the next stage of their education. Current chosen subjects for the EPQ include 'Are we born with morals?' and 'Cyanide fishing in the Philippines'. In response to the recommendation in the last inspection report, a full, co-ordinated careers programme, including work experience and a Gap Year fair, has been established for pupils from Years 9 to 13.
- 3.5 The curriculum is planned to ensure continuity of learning across year groups. The school provides well for all its pupils, including those with LDD or with EAL. Extra support sessions, where appropriate, are provided as part of the curriculum. A co-ordinator has been appointed and an effective scheme is in place to identify gifted and talented pupils, who are catered for through setting arrangements and extension tasks. Since the last inspection, a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) for the junior school and a new director of sport have been appointed to improve further the quality of the pupils' development. The library contributes positively to the pupils' learning. Not content to stand still, the school continues to reassess its curriculum provision to improve further pupils' performance.
- 3.6 The extra-curricular provision, closely linked to the academic curriculum, offers an extensive range of activities, some pupil-led, where they can discover and develop talents outside the classroom, the 'not yet very good at saxophone club' for example. Drama, rowing, music and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme have a high profile. An exciting range of visits and trips is integrated into the curriculum. Links with the community are varied and extensive, and include a long-standing link with a school in the Gambia and the Community Service programme, set up since the last inspection. Pupils identify the charities they wish to support and raise considerable sums of money.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.7 The quality of teaching overall is excellent. Pupils are enabled to make rapid progress in line with the aims of the school. Teaching is highly effective. Teachers project their subject enthusiasm and plan focused, stimulating, enjoyable lessons that build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. In most lessons observed, teachers maintained a brisk pace, engaged their pupils, used effective questioning techniques, made excellent use of resources, and encouraged pupils to think for themselves and take responsibility for their learning. In a few, less successful lessons, pupils were not fully involved or given sufficient opportunities to explore their own ideas. Teachers know their pupils well, are aware of their different needs and give individual help where needed. Praise is used to good effect and this adds to the pupils' enjoyment of their work. Teachers are reflective practitioners and display an extremely strong desire to raise standards further and share good practice. Marking and assessment are mostly of a high quality and include helpful comments for further improvement. Teachers' mark books are informative and well kept.
- 3.8 An outstanding feature of the school is teachers' knowledge of their pupils and excellent relations with them within the classroom. Consequently, teachers are aware of pupils' needs and match work to their different abilities. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and detailed records kept, which are available to all staff. Excellent use is made of assessment data. The trust teachers inspire gives the pupils the confidence to strive for excellence and respond to high expectations. In the words of a Year 6 pupil: 'the teachers here are the best; they make you work hard but they make work fun.'
- 3.9 The senior school SENCO and the recently appointed SENCO in the junior school have comprehensive systems to identify and respond to pupils' particular needs. Integrated individual work plans are provided where appropriate. In the senior school, lunch time workshops provide flexible, welcoming arrangements for pupils needing additional help. In the junior school, teaching assistants with different expertise are most effectively deployed. Good systems identify gifted and talented pupils and provide them with opportunities for challenge and enrichment.
- 3.10 Planning and schemes of work are carefully monitored by heads of department in the senior school and subject co-ordinators in the junior school. Since the last inspection, the senior school director of studies has taken on the status of deputy head (academic) and, with the junior school director of studies, has developed mechanisms to assess the quality of teaching and learning. In the junior school, in response to the last inspection report, the system to record progress in the non-core subjects has been reviewed. The sharing of good teaching practice is actively promoted as an integral part of the system of self-review. The school has in place an ongoing programme of induction for newly qualified teachers and all new staff.
- 3.11 Budgeting arrangements are generous and ensure that teachers have the materials they need to teach their subjects effectively. Teachers make full use of the high quality resources at their disposal. Classrooms in the junior and senior school are light, spacious and well appointed. Most have interactive white boards which are used to excellent effect.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent and in accordance with the aims of the school to encourage them to appreciate their good fortune, to explore their place in the world, and to develop a sound moral framework and appreciation of the spiritual dimension of life.
- 4.2 Pupils have highly developed personal qualities. They are caring and considerate towards others and sensitive to their feelings. Their personal development is promoted by outstanding relationships within the community. They have high self-esteem, and are self-critical and keen to offer opinions without fear of being wrong or revealing vulnerabilities. Pupils are encouraged to participate in all areas of school life and this contributes to their self-confidence. Pupils are respectful to their teachers, courteous to visitors, friendly and outgoing. Their manners and behaviour are exemplary. From an early age, they eagerly take on responsibilities from the wide range of opportunities available to them. The roles offer the pupils the chance to develop their leadership skills and to show initiative, reinforcing the value of the school community. Pupils are elected by their peers to the junior and senior school councils, enabling them to take responsibility for representing opinions and ideas. The school has identified 'The Grange Way' to stretch cultural horizons, and to develop self-regulation and relationships. Pupils' sense of community is enhanced when they come together for school assemblies. Work experience, promoted by the school, and a well-co-ordinated careers programme prepare pupils effectively for the next stage in their education. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils expressed appreciation of the role they can play in the life of the school.
- 4.3 Pupils gain a secure set of moral beliefs from assemblies, lessons and the role models provided by their teachers. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. They respect the school rules and consider them to be fair. They generally consider the system of rewards and sanctions to be applied appropriately. They understand and support the high standards of behaviour expected of them. They have a keen sense of fair play. Pupils are highly active when raising money in charitable work, often organised through their own initiative. Pupils are aware of the difference their support makes to those less fortunate than themselves. The Community Action group, for example, provides the opportunity to assist with Riding for the Disabled. Pupils welcome opportunities to guide and help younger members of the school. Through PSE lessons, pupils are able to explore issues such as the death penalty.
- 4.4 Spirituality is evident in many areas of school life. An assembly about moon rock inspired pupils to think beyond the boundaries of their own world. Pupils have a well-developed aesthetic and spiritual awareness, promoted through school assemblies, the natural world around them, and during lessons and activities.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is strong. They have a sensitive understanding of the beliefs and values of others and an appreciation of cultural diversity. Pupils develop their understanding of other cultures, as well as an awareness of their own culture, through assemblies, community links, dedicated days and visits, and in lessons.
- 4.6 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents overwhelmingly confirmed that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views.

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

- 4.7 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. The quality of pastoral care, as at the time of the last inspection, is a strength of the school. The school's aim that pupils should respect and value those around them and be sensitive to the needs of others is demonstrated clearly throughout the school. Pupils feel safe, valued and happy, confident that they are surrounded by staff who care for and support them. A family feeling is tangible within this large community. The school encourages consideration for others, understanding, self-discipline and courtesy through, for example, 'The Grange School Children's Charter.' The staff and senior pupils give generous amounts of time to provide outstanding support and guidance and ensure that pupils have someone to turn to.
- 4.8 The inclusion of a programme of pastoral review within the school's professional accountability structures is an excellent initiative. Effective systems, clear lines of communication and carefully kept records ensure high quality pastoral care. Respectful relationships between staff and pupils contribute positively to the pupils' well-being. Staff promote pupils' self-confidence through praise and encouragement. They know their pupils well and this fosters an environment where the pupils thrive. A variety of channels exist to ensure that their voices are heard. New pupils are inducted successfully.
- 4.9 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, some pupils suggested that they are not treated equally. No evidence of this was seen and, in talking to a large number of pupils, this view was not confirmed. Similarly, no evidence was found to support the view of some pupils in the questionnaire that rewards and sanctions are unfair. Some parents feel that the school does little to help pupils with their work load. The evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils, wanting to do well, take on extra work, but discrete support helps them to manage it themselves.
- 4.10 The school has a pro-active approach to guard against bullying. Pupils say that it is rare and agree that staff deal with any issues constructively.
- 4.11 The safeguarding of pupils is excellent; all staff are trained and the school has a good relationship with the local authority safeguarding team. Effective procedures, fully endorsed by parents, promote good behaviour.
- 4.12 Procedures ensuring the pupils' health and safety are excellent. Measures taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards are in place, regular fire drills are held and staff receive fire training. Health and safety procedures are effective, with risk assessments covering all aspects of school life. A health and safety committee, chaired by the operations director, meets regularly to discuss any matters of concern. Electrical testing is carried out appropriately, and health and safety documentation is thorough. Any accidents are suitably recorded and facilities for those who become ill during the school day are good. The recent appointment of a school nurse confirms the school's commitment to the care of its pupils. An accessibility plan has been written, which is designed to improve the educational provision for those with disabilities and is in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. Disability access in many areas of the school is good. Pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise. A large number of pupils enjoy the school meals, which are nutritious and provide choice. The admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. The governing body competently oversees the work of the school and helps to secure its aim to provide a stimulating, rewarding and supportive environment for all who are employed there. The governing body is characterised by its energy, involvement and strong motivation on behalf of the school. Governors are extremely effective in discharging their responsibilities. All statutory responsibilities are met for child protection, welfare, and health and safety throughout the school. This is confirmed by the recent establishment of the education and compliance committees, the appointment of the operations director and the presence of a legal manager.
- 5.2 Governors offer a wide range of expertise, are well informed and make a very positive contribution to the work of the school. Their number includes parents of past and present pupils, who bring a particular commitment and loyalty to the governing body. A comprehensive, strategic development programme is in place with short-, medium- and long-term objectives. Governors recognise the need for training and most have, for example, completed a course in child protection.
- 5.3 The governors are highly effective in financial planning, which has led to the recent completion of a substantial building programme. They provide and maintain very high quality accommodation, which enhances the learning environment. They ensure that a balance is struck between material and human resources, and that these are used to best advantage to meet the needs of the pupils.
- 5.4 Senior staff and governors enjoy excellent relationships built on trust, openness and a shared vision. Governors receive regular information from the heads of the junior and senior schools and other members of staff, giving insight into the challenges and successes of the school. The school as a whole is exceptionally well supported by the governors and their response to its needs. Communications are regular and straightforward. Effective mechanisms are in place to evaluate the work of the headmaster. The governors have implemented all the recommendations from the last report.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 Leadership and management throughout the school are excellent. They are in line with the school's aim to provide clear direction and a focus on improvement at all levels. The head of the senior school has overall responsibility. Leadership in both the junior and senior schools is visionary and dynamic. Members of the senior leadership team share the values and forward-looking vision of the heads and are highly effective in their roles. They bring together a broad range of skills and expertise, which is recognised through the headmaster's willingness to devolve responsibilities.
- 5.6 Management at all levels is excellent. A strong structure of middle and senior management ensures a regular and effective review of staff, the curriculum and the close tracking of pupils' personal and academic development. Regular, open meetings between academic and pastoral staff ensure an integrated approach to pupils' development and achievements. An outstanding strength of leadership and

management is their ongoing willingness to evaluate constructively the quality of education they provide.

- 5.7 Staff show outstanding dedication, loyalty and commitment in all areas of school life. They are happy and feel valued. Heads of department, heads of year in the senior school and subject co-ordinators in the junior school are given freedom to develop their own ideas. Staff are highly motivated by the leadership and readily respond to the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process. Systems, policies and procedures covering all aspects of school life are implemented to ensure the highly effective monitoring of academic and pastoral matters. Detailed development plans are contributed by all departments, setting out objectives for educational growth over the forthcoming academic year and beyond.
- 5.8 Great care is taken to ensure that the highest quality staff, who fully support the school's ethos, are appointed. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety, and there are thorough recruitment checks to ensure the suitability to work with children of all school personnel, governors and volunteers. Staffing levels are excellent. Teaching staff are deployed effectively, as are classroom support staff in the junior school and EYFS, providing strong support for all pupils throughout the school. Non-teaching staff make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal and academic development through their support roles. Professional development of staff is highly effective. The junior school has recently successfully implemented the performance management process already established in the senior school. Opportunities to share the outstanding practice and expertise that exist in both the junior and senior schools are not yet formalised.

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

- 5.9 The links between the school and parents are excellent and strongly support the school's academic and personal development aims. This close partnership is particularly valued by the school.
- 5.10 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are very satisfied with information about their children's progress, and they are aware that policies and procedures are readily available. Parents appreciate, in particular, the pastoral care, the help and guidance offered, the high standards of behaviour, the positive attitudes promoted and the extra-curricular opportunities. They are very satisfied with the extra-curricular opportunities. Parents agree that they can communicate easily with the school and that they are encouraged to be involved in its life and work. A small number of parents expressed the opinion that their concerns had not been handled well. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.
- 5.11 Parents are kept fully informed about their children's progress through the detailed and informative reports sent twice a year, and most include clear guidance to help their children improve. In addition to the reports, parents are invited to attend at least one parents' evening in each year, though the majority of year groups hold more than one.
- 5.12 Parents of current and prospective pupils receive full information directly from the school or through the website. The website, currently being updated, provides attractively presented information on a wide range of the school's activities. The pupils' home-school diaries, the weekly *Friday Flash* news bulletin, the comprehensive newsletter and an email system ensure excellent and regular

communication between parents and the school. The regular parental satisfaction surveys and inclusion of parents in the 'Curriculum 2020' research process confirm the school's strong commitment to strong relations with its parents. Parents have considerable, varied opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. The appointment of a new deputy head in the senior school to oversee and develop communications with parents has further improved links. As members of The Grange School Trust, parents have the opportunity to talk directly to governors at the annual general meeting. Themed coffee mornings in the junior school are popular.

- 5.13 The school appreciates the very supportive work of the Parents' Association, particularly fund-raising. Recent projects include the purchase of climbing frames, the setting up of a fitness gymnasium and the establishment of a memorial garden.
- 5.14 Since the last inspection, the appointment of a marketing manager has further improved the quality of communications. The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure, and its 'open door' policy ensures that most issues are resolved informally and speedily.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the provision for the EYFS is outstanding in meeting the needs of all the children and fully appreciating their individual differences. The setting makes continuous improvement through an excellent system of review and self-evaluation. The successful development of child-initiated learning and assessment ensures that no child or group is disadvantaged. The setting has made excellent progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous report, in the areas of improving the provision of ICT, and design and technology. Staff have a clear understanding of children's needs, and create a stimulating and colourful environment where children feel valued and safe.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding, with a clear vision and understanding of high standards. Safeguarding procedures are robust, with meticulous implementation of comprehensive policies and risk assessments. All staff have been suitably checked, and are well qualified and appropriately trained. All records, policies and procedures necessary for efficient management are implemented rigorously. An exemplary framework for risk assessment includes daily checks on equipment and resources, which are safe and effectively used. Parents express strong appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of care. Every opportunity is taken to inform parents of their children's progress and to give them clear information about the learning environment, although in discussions parents do not yet feel they know enough about the six areas of learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning and complete 'wow moment' notes at home. The effective use and good management of resources, including those outdoors, lead to successful outcomes for all children.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. All children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. Staff do their utmost to ensure that the children's learning experience is positive and fulfilling; children are given 'Time to talk, time to think and time to shine'. A well-judged balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children are observant and inquisitive, and staff ask challenging questions to develop their thinking skills. They are quick to see where support is needed. Provision for the welfare of children is exemplary. Good health and well-being are emphasised. The behaviour policy is well implemented, leading to a happy and busy atmosphere where children benefit fully from all of the opportunities provided.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. The children achieve very well and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. They communicate fluently, enjoy books, and express their thoughts and feelings with developing confidence. They enjoy writing, make good attempts at spelling simple words and are able to retell stories accurately. They exhibit accurate estimation skills when guessing how many ice cubes are in a tray. In ICT they work confidently with a paint programme and enjoy using individual laptops, exhibiting excellent mouse skills. Children are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated, relating well to one another and to adults. They co-operate well in their learning and begin to make choices and decisions. Children respect and trust their teachers. They enjoy their healthy snacks and lunches, and are aware of the need to maintain hygiene and to be safe.

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 a governor, 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 Jenny Longbourne	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Eileen Parris	Assistant Reporting Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mrs Joy Gatenby	Head, GSA school
Ms Susan Rix	Former Head, SHMIS school
Mr David Goulbourn	Head, SHMIS school
Mr Laurence Fleck	Director of Faculty, GSA school
Mr Stephen Gray	Director of Studies, HMC school
Miss Margaret Pepper	Former Head, ISA school
Mrs Frances Proud	Head of Department, HMC school
Mrs Lynda Boden	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector