



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE GREGG SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Gregg School

Full Name of School	<b>The Gregg School</b>
DfE Number	<b>852/6000</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1089055</b>
Address	<b>The Gregg School Townhill Park House Cutbush Lane Southampton Hampshire SO18 2GF</b>
Telephone Number	<b>023 80472133</b>
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Email Address	<b>office@gregg.southampton.sch.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Sherilee Sellers</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Jason Glover</b>
Chair of Trustees	<b>Mr John Watts</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 16</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>322</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (184 boys; 138 girls;)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>322</b>
Inspection dates	<b>18 Jan 2011 to 19 Jan 2011 16 Feb 2011 to 18 Feb 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.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 The Gregg School is a non-selective co-educational day school for pupils aged eleven to sixteen years. The school aims to enable pupils to maximise their potential in a caring and supportive environment, by developing both a thirst for knowledge and the skills needed for lifelong learning.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1901 and moved to the Townhill Park House and estate on the outskirts of Southampton in 1994. Classrooms are located in the main house. The library, science, music, drama and design and technology (DT) departments are situated in converted stables and cottages. The twenty-three acre estate now provides extensive playing fields and parkland as well as famous gardens (which are occasionally open to the public). The school, with its associated preparatory school St Winifred's, became a charitable trust in 2002. The trust has financial and legal responsibility for both the schools; a separate governing body oversees educational matters.
- 1.3 The school currently has 322 pupils on roll. The ability profile of the school, as measured by nationally standardised tests, is slightly above the national average with a wide range of abilities represented. The majority of pupils join the school in Year 7 but can also join at other times. The school's entrance tests are used to ensure that pupils can benefit from the curriculum offered. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and from many family backgrounds including academic, professional and business.
- 1.4 Currently two pupils have a statement of special educational need (SEN) and 59 pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and receive specialist learning support from the school. Twenty pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), the majority of these are fluent speakers and users of English. One pupil currently receives specialised support.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims to maximize their potential and to develop a thirst for knowledge and the skills needed for lifelong learning. Pupils' achievement in curricular and extra-curricular activities is at least good and often excellent. Pupils make good progress, attain well and consistently achieve well at GCSE. They have very positive attitudes to their work and activities. The curriculum is excellent and is appropriate for all the pupils in the school, including the most able and those who have LDD and SEN. As recommended in the last report, the school has significantly improved the facilities and use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school and is successfully developing the library as a learning resource centre. The quality of teaching is good with significant strengths and is very effective in promoting pupils' progress, providing well for the wide range of ability and needs of the pupils. Marking does not always indicate how pupils can improve their work.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. It is nurtured by the caring, respectful relationships and strong sense of community within the school and fulfils the aims of the school. The school has successfully created a curriculum which gives many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually and culturally. They are reflective, self-confident and live and work with understanding, tolerance and enjoyment of other faiths and cultures. Pastoral care is excellent within a strong framework, ensuring effective support is given when needed.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is excellent. The division of the responsibilities between the trust and the governing body is clear. Regular liaison between the two bodies ensures that all aspects of these responsibilities, including those for safeguarding children and for the safe employment of staff, are fulfilled. The management of the school is good, and leadership is excellent. The leadership team know the school well, and have accurately identified current priorities. They have effective strategies in place for monitoring the work of both teachers and pupils in most areas, and have fulfilled the recommendation made in the previous inspection report to implement staff performance management. As noted in the last report relationships with parents are excellent. Parents are highly supportive of many aspects of the school; they would appreciate clarification of the grades used on reports and the inspection supported this.

## **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. Develop a whole school marking policy which coordinates the departmental marking policies.
2. Monitor marking to ensure that it consistently contributes to 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 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims to maximise their potential and to develop a thirst for knowledge and the skills needed for lifelong learning.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils' overall achievement in both curricular and extra-curricular activities is at least good and often excellent. Pupils are excellent listeners, both to each other and to their teachers. They read and write well and are articulate, confident and lucid. As they progress through the school pupils become logical and independent thinkers. They are creative, enjoying the opportunities they have for performances in drama and music. An excellent string orchestra rehearsal involved pupils of differing ability as well as teachers. Striking art work is on display in many areas of the school. Pupils are numerate, transferring their skills effectively to subjects across the curriculum. ICT is used increasingly well by pupils who are imaginative and show expertise. The school encourages pupils to take part in activities which widen their experience and further develop their skills, for example, the Salters' Festival of Science, and they have competed successfully in the national mathematics challenge. The opportunities for sport are wide and pupils participate successfully in many team and individual sports. Pupils take part in numerous local, county and national sporting events with great success. The junior rounders team recently gained first place in the Southampton Schools' League. Additionally, dance is an important part of the curriculum which is greatly enjoyed by many pupils.
- 3.3 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. In these years, pupils have achieved results above the national average for pupils in maintained secondary schools; ninety percent of them achieved five or more A\*-C grades and a quarter of grades were at A\*-A level. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as is also shown in lessons and confirmed by the analysis of nationally standardised measures of progress. Pupils who are gifted or talented, and those with LDD, progress equally well. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are prepared well for the next stage of their education; they gain places at local sixth form and further education colleges.
- 3.4 Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate and work very well together, participating fully in lessons, and they are keen to take part in sensible discussion. They are attentive, responsive and enjoy their work. They are fully involved in school activities. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are always very keen to help each other.



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

- 3.5 The curriculum is excellent; it is broad, balanced and highly effective in its coverage of all the requisite areas of learning. The school has a reflective, evaluative approach to the curriculum; regular reviews ensure that, in line with the aims of the school, it is appropriate for all the pupils in the school, including the most able and those who have LDD and SEN who receive valuable support. The curriculum is flexible and can be adapted to suit the needs of an individual pupil. The GCSE options blocks are planned each year in response to pupil choices; a high percentage of pupils achieve their first choice. A range of language learning options is available, able scientists can study three separate sciences, and specific courses are available for less able pupils or those with LDD to ensure that they leave school with qualifications which will take them on to the next stage of their education. A wide range of creative, arts and practical subjects challenge and stimulate the pupils and the development of ICT facilities across the school, including banks of laptop computers for classroom use, has facilitated its use across the curriculum. The carefully planned programme of personal and social development (PSD) broadens pupils' learning. The introduction of further vocational courses is under consideration. The banding and setting arrangements and the two week timetable are used very effectively to provide challenge and support to enable all pupils to do their best. The pupils benefit from and enjoy the many and varied educational trips and visits including trips abroad which take place during the year.
- 3.6 The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and pupils participate enthusiastically in clubs as diverse as drama, philosophy, cookery and electronics as well as in activities including choir, wind band, jazz group and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Late buses run to enable pupils to attend activities.
- 3.7 Excellent links have been established with the local community through charity fund raising and through work experience links, the school's harvest gifts were delivered to delighted residents in local sheltered housing. The choir and musical groups regularly perform locally. The pupils are involved in both national and international charities through very generous fund raising and, in some cases, through visits as volunteers to distant parts of the world. A recent assembly given by a past pupil has established a link with a school in Tanzania.

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

- 3.8 The quality of teaching is good with significant strengths and is very effective in promoting pupils' progress, in keeping with the school's aims.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, teachers know their pupils very well, and plan and provide extremely effectively for the wide range of abilities and needs. Teachers are firm, but friendly and pupils respond with very good behaviour. Lessons are well planned, with a range of varied and suitably timed tasks including group work, practical work, and physical activity. This careful planning results in lessons with good pace and suitable challenge to the pupils. Classrooms are well resourced and equipped and teachers use the resources well.
- 3.10 Departmental long- and medium-term planning is consistently good and this enables teachers to plan their lessons well. Many teachers make excellent use of pupil self evaluation in lessons. Independent learning is promoted by, for example, identifying the National Curriculum attainment levels on worksheets, in notebooks and on classroom displays and encouraging pupils to identify what it is they can do to raise their standard of achievement to the next level. During lessons, pupils were observed effectively evaluating both each others' work and their own work and planning targets for their next piece of work. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they fully understand the demands of the relevant examination syllabi. The school has implemented the recommendations of the previous report and has made considerable strides in its teaching provision.
- 3.11 The school has developed a sophisticated and very thorough academic tracking system making excellent use of assessment. Nationally standardised data is used as a baseline to monitor pupils' progress, and this information is used with internal assessments to inform the half termly reports to parents, to set pupils' targets and to plan the curriculum. The data is used very effectively to inform planning within departments and to monitor pupils' progress throughout the year.
- 3.12 At its best, marking is excellent but it is used inconsistently across the school. Some marking includes positive advice to the pupils about what they have to do to achieve the next level and to improve their work. Sometimes, though, marking is little more than an acknowledgement of work completed. Although the requirements for marking are outlined in the assessment policy, there is no discrete school marking policy and each department has developed its own, with the result that practice varies and pupils are not always advised what they should do to improve. Homework tasks are carefully set throughout the school to extend learning. Teaching and learning is well supported by the recent introduction of a very highly effective intranet for access by teachers, pupils and parents.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' personal development is excellent. It is nurtured by the caring, respectful relationships and strong sense of community within the school and fulfils the aims of the school.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They develop confidence and excellent levels of self-esteem through an ethos that encourages them to be proud of their achievements and offers many opportunities to succeed. They develop self-awareness and appreciate the opportunity to learn thinking skills and to discuss faiths and religion. They value experiences such as the visit to a Buddhist temple in Wimbledon which challenges them to explore ideals and non-material aspects of life.
- 4.3 Pupils have a clear sense of morality. They appreciate the difference between right and wrong and have an evident sense of justice, fair play and law. They understand the need for sanctions and appreciate rewards, holding the school's Mercury rewards in high esteem. Many opportunities are provided to engage with moral and ethical questions through thought-provoking assemblies, their own writing, and in discussions in classes including religious studies (RS). They readily discuss moral problems of importance to young people in PSD. Where issues of morality affect their lives directly, for example in questions relating to social networking sites, the pupils show a mature and responsible attitude.
- 4.4 Pupils accept responsibility and learn to contribute to life within and beyond the confines of the school. Pupils value and enjoy the many posts of responsibilities through which they can contribute to their community; for example, the school council operates successfully and is a useful forum for pupils' views. A working party is currently considering joining the Eco Schools project. The house system gives opportunities to take responsibility and competitions are hard fought. Pupils are mindful of their responsibilities as citizens and discharge them by taking part in community service activities such as the local Mayor's toy appeal or the senior citizens' party. Pupils give time generously to support charities at home and abroad, and are outstanding fund raisers; they have a keen understanding that there are many less fortunate than themselves. They volunteer willingly to act as guides when the school opens to the public; in addition, Year 11 pupils organise drama activities for those in Year 7 showing willingness, confidence and developing qualities of leadership. Extensive work experience offered in Year 10 allows pupils to contribute to and learn about life beyond the school.
- 4.5 The social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed religious, spiritual and cultural experiences for the pupils within the curriculum. Cultural development is extended by trips abroad, and by visits to museums and theatres; pupils value these opportunities to experience art, dance and music. The RS curriculum ensures that pupils experience diverse religions and cultures, and from this they learn to enjoy a harmonious cultural community. In an RS lesson in Year 7, pupils studying Buddhism talked enthusiastically about enlightenment. A recent assembly was conducted by two Masai warriors, one of whom was the headmaster from the school with which the school has a link in Tanzania. This gave pupils a valuable insight into schools in other parts of the world.

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

- 4.6 The pastoral care provided by the school is excellent and fulfils the school's aims by maximising pupils' potential in a safe and supportive environment.
- 4.7 The school has a strong framework for its pastoral care system, which is efficiently managed, recorded and monitored. The team of pastoral staff offer outstanding nurture and support. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are outstanding in a climate of openness and trust. Pastoral issues are discussed in regular staff meetings and measures are put in place to help resolve them. In questionnaires and interviews, pupils indicated they know who to go to with problems and appreciate the wide-ranging support available. Pupils treat each other with respect and understanding, and they thrive in the caring and supportive atmosphere. The culture of praise and encouragement promotes growth in self-confidence, maturity and independence as pupils progress through the school. In pupil interviews, Year 7 pupils spoke positively about their Year 11 buddies and said they appreciate the support they give. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are given additional responsibilities and speak warmly of these posts. A comprehensive programme of work experience, the services of a qualified careers advisor, and opportunities for leadership combine to make the pupils feel well prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave school.
- 4.8 The school has effective policies and procedures to promote good behaviour, to guard against harassment and bullying and to deal constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. In both their responses to the pupils' questionnaire and in discussions, pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they enjoy the ethos of the school which strengthens good relationships in all areas of school life encouraging pupils to be aware of the needs of others. In PSD work about bullying, pupils learn both to think about how to behave and also how to get help if they need it.
- 4.9 The school's safeguarding policy meets the requirements and is implemented successfully, with all staff receiving appropriate training. The requirements for the safe employment of staff are met in full. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are excellent. The school makes comfortable provision for pupils who are ill and for those with LDD. The school has an appropriate plan in place in response to improve provision and educational access for pupils with SEN or disabilities.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily; a menu which includes healthy choices is offered in the dining room. Healthy eating is included in the PSD programme from Year 7 onwards. Pupils of all ages take regular exercise in lessons and free time; many pupils enjoy their participation in sporting activities. A hard fought house cross-country competition took place during the inspection with many pupils running for their house. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for three years.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent. The division of responsibilities in governance between the trust and the governing body is clear; regular communication and meetings between the two bodies ensure that all aspects of these responsibilities are fulfilled. The trust exercises careful financial planning and has invested well in staff, in updating and refurbishing accommodation and in facilities such as remodelling outdoor pitches. The head reports fully to both the trust and the governing body and attends the meetings of both bodies. The education budget is devolved to the head and her team; they have been able to invest in key staff in areas such as the library, and in updating resources including ICT facilities, in line with the needs of the school as identified in the school development and improvement plan.
- 5.2 The governing body includes members with a wide variety of appropriate skills and experience, including both present and past parents, and they are all highly committed to the school. The governing body has responsibility for educational matters and works well to support the senior leadership team (SLT) by taking on the role of critical friend. The development of sub-committees has ensured that governors' expertise is well-used; the links between individual governors and departments of the school means that the governing body gains first-hand knowledge of the work and life of the school. A governor has been appointed and trained to take responsibility for the safe employment procedures in the school.
- 5.3 The strategy and planning sub-committee of the governing body take responsibility for safeguarding matters; the committee receives a report at each meeting. A member of this committee is the nominated governor with responsibility for child protection and has appropriate safeguarding qualifications. The legal requirement for an annual review and report on safeguarding matters and the responsibility for welfare, health and safety is fulfilled by the governing body who report to the trust.

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

- 5.4 The management of the school is good, and leadership is excellent. The clear, vibrant vision is shared by trustees, governors and the leadership team. This vision is at the heart of the work of the school and it brings the aims of the school to life. With the change in head, a new management structure has been established which gives clearly defined roles to the SLT; all members have both pastoral and academic responsibility, ensuring high levels of care and progress for the pupils in their care. This all-round responsibility is supported and informed by teachers who know their pupils very well, through a comprehensive pattern of meetings and careful record keeping.
- 5.5 The SLT have a reflective and evaluative approach to their work and the school development and improvement plan reflects this, with priorities clearly identified and implemented following consultation and review. Departmental development plans follow the same pattern and are useful working documents to support school improvement. The SLT and heads of departments are working effectively to ensure high standards of planning and to monitor the work of teachers as well as the progress of pupils, which is carefully and comprehensively tracked. As yet the

department policies and practice on marking are not fully coordinated and monitored which has resulted in some inconsistencies.

- 5.6 As recommended in the last report, the management team now have a well established professional review process for all staff, who have many opportunities to undertake further training. The introduction of an assessment for learning approach in lessons has been successfully implemented across the school resulting in pupils understanding how well they are achieving and what they have to do to improve. The SLT also have a clear system for annual review and presentation of policies to the governing body, and for monitoring their implementation. Full safeguarding procedures are in place and all staff have received the appropriate level of training in safeguarding and in welfare, health and safety procedures. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff (including volunteers), supply staff and governors.

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

- 5.7 Relationships with parents are excellent. The school has maintained the strong links with parents noted at the time of the last inspection. Responses to the current parental questionnaire show that parents are highly supportive of the school; they particularly value the attitudes and values promoted and the ease with which they can communicate with the school. Parents appreciate the high standards of behaviour that the school achieves. They are pleased with the progress that their children make, with the high quality learning support and feel that an appropriate range of subjects is offered. Inspectors agreed with all these views. Some concerns about homework were expressed, and the school is currently reviewing this; the inspection found the homework timetable to be clear, appropriate and carefully monitored by both form tutors and assistant heads.
- 5.8 Parents agree that they are encouraged to be involved in the work of the school; they continue to support the work experience scheme for Year 10 pupils, to volunteer to help with visits and trips and to support the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association which provides many opportunities to enjoy social occasions as well as to participate in school events and fund raising.
- 5.9 Parents say that they receive timely responses to their enquiries, find that information about the school and its policies is easily available, and see that the school is well run. Parents value many other aspects of the work of the school, in particular the quality of pastoral care. Parents and prospective parents receive all the required information about the school, including the appropriate information about work with pupils with EAL needs, which was identified as a recommendation in the last report.
- 5.10 A small number of parents indicated that they would appreciate more information about their child's progress, and some parents feel that the grades and comments on school reports are not always clear. Parents receive regular and comprehensive reports. The annual full report is followed at the beginning of the next year by meetings with parents to discuss the targets set for the year. Further regular parents meetings take place with teachers to discuss progress, and specific meetings are held to inform parents of Year 9 option choices, Year 10 work experience plans and at other key times. The inspection found that the grade system is insufficiently explained to parents, but that in many areas parents receive comprehensive information and opportunities to meet staff.

- 5.11 Parents are consulted by the school in a number of ways, including the annual parents' forum and the biennial parental questionnaire conducted by the school. Where available, direct email communication with form tutors and teachers is effective in allowing parents direct contact. Urgent messages are communicated by text. A wide range of other means of communication are used to keep parents well informed, including the daily pupil diary, newsletters, the school website which includes a weekly parents' bulletin and the text messaging service. The school has a clear and comprehensive policy and procedure for dealing with parental concerns, and no complaint has reached the formal stage of the procedure in the last year.

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

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Gwen Caddock

Mr Robert Chatburn

Mrs Diane Durrant

Mr Richard Walker

Reporting Inspector

Deputy Head Academic, SHMIS School

Deputy Head (Pastoral), SHMIS School

Headmaster, SHMIS and ISA school